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THE REVOLT OF THE NETHERLANDS.

THE REVOLT

OF THE

UNITED NETHERLANDS.

WITH

THE TRIAL OF COUNTS EGMONT AND HORN,
AND THE SIEGE OF ANTWERP;

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE DISTURBANCES IN FRANCE.
(1560-74)
PRECEDING THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.

BY

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.

TRANSLATED BY

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PREFACE.

THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLT OF THE NETHERLANDS is now for the first time issued in a single volume. The work was originally translated by Lieutenant E. B. Eastwick, and was published abroad for the use of students. This translation has been carefully revised, and to some extent rewritten by the Rev. A. J. W. Morrison.

In addition to the Siege of Antwerp, another of Schiller's lucid historical essays, on the religious troubles in France which preceded the reign of Henry IV., has been appended. The translator of the last is Miss L. D. Schmitz, whose name is already well known through other translations in this Series.

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THE

HISTORY OF THE REVOLT

OF THE

UNITED NETHERLANDS.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Many years ago, when I read the History of the Belgian Revolution in Watson's excellent work, I was seized with an enthusiasm which political events but rarely excite. On further reflection, I felt that this enthusiastic feeling had arisen less from the book itself than from the ardent workings of my own imagination, which had imparted to the recorded materials the particular form that so fascinated me. These imaginations, therefore, I felt a wish to fix, to multiply, and to strengthen; these exalted sentiments I was anxious to extend, by communicating them to others. This was my principal motive for commencing the present history, my only vocation to write it. The execution of this design carried me farther than in the beginning I had expected. A closer acquaintance with my materials enabled me to discover defects, previously unnoticed, long waste tracts to be filled up, apparent contradictions to be reconciled, and isolated facts to be brought into connection with the rest of the subject. Not so much with the view of enriching my history with new facts as of seeking a key to old ones, I betook myself to the original sources, and thus what was originally intended to be only a general outline expanded under my hands into an elaborate history. The first part, which concludes with the Duchess of Parma's departure from the Netherlands, must be looked upon only as the introduction to the history of the Revolution itself, which did not come to an open outbreak till the government of her successor. I have bestowed the more care and attention upon this introductory period, the more the generality of writers who had previously treated of it seemed to me deficient in these very qualities. Moreover, it is in my opinion the more important as being the root and source of all the subsequent events. If, then, the first volume should appear to any as barren in important incident, dwelling prolixly on trifles, or, rather, should seem at first sight profuse of reflections, and, in general, tediously minute, it must be remembered that it was precisely out of small beginnings that the Revolution was gradually developed; and that all the great results which follow sprang out of a countless number of trifling and little circumstances.

A nation like the one before us invariably takes its first steps with doubts and uncertainty, to move afterwards only the more rapidly for its previous hesitation. I proposed therefore to follow the same method in describing this rebellion. The longer the reader delays on the introduction, the more familiar he becomes with the actors in this history, and the scene in which they took a part, so much the more rapidly and unerringly shall I be able to lead him through the subsequent periods, where the accumulation of materials will forbid a slowness of step or minuteness of attention.

As for the authorities of our history, there is not so much cause to complain of their paucity as of their extreme abundance, since it is indispensable to read them all to obtain that clear view of the whole subject to which the perusal of a part, however large, is always prejudicial. From the unequal, partial, and often contradictory narratives of the same occurrences, it is often extremely difficult to seize the truth, which, in all, is alike partly concealed, and to be found complete in none. In this first volume, besides de Thou, Strada, Reyd, Grotius, Meteren, Burgundius, Meursius, Bentivoglio, and some moderns, the Memoirs of Counsellor Hopper, the life and correspondence of his friend Viglius, the records of the trials of the Counts of Hoorne and

Egmont, the defence of the Prince of Orange, and some few others, have been my guides. I must here acknowledge my obligations to a work compiled with much industry and critical acumen, and written with singular truthfulness and impartiality. I allude to the general history of the United Netherlands which was published in Holland during the present century. Besides many original documents which I could not otherwise have had access to, it has abstracted all that is valuable in the excellent works of Bos, Hooft, Brandt, Le Clerc, which either were impossible for me to procure or were not available to my use, as being written in Dutch, which I do not understand. An otherwise ordinary writer, Richard Dinoth, has also been of service to me, by the many extracts he gives from the pamphlets of the day, which have been long lost. I have in vain endeavoured to procure the correspondence of Cardinal Granvella, which also would, no doubt, have thrown much light upon the history of these times. The lately published work on the Spanish Inquisition, by my excellent countryman, Professor Spittler of Göttingen, reached me too late for its sagacious and important contents to be available for my purpose.

The more I am convinced of the importance of the French history, the more I lament that it was not in my power to study, as I could have wished, its copious annals, in the original sources and contemporary documents, and to reproduce it, abstracted of the form in which it was transmitted to me by the more intelligent of my predecessors, and thereby emancipate myself from the influence which every talented author exercises more or less upon his readers. But to effect this, the work of a few years must have become the labour of a life. My aim in making this attempt will be more than attained if it should convince a portion of the reading public of the possibility of writing a history with historic truth, without making a trial of patience to the reader; and if it should extort from another portion the confession that history can borrow from a cognate art, without thereby, of necessity, becoming a romance.

Weimar, Michaelmas Fair, 1788.

INTRODUCTION.

Of those important political events which make the sixteenth century to take rank among the brightest of the world's epochs, the foundation of the freedom of the Netherlands appears to me one of the most remarkable. If the glittering exploits of ambition and the pernicious lust of power claim our admiration, how much more so should an event in which oppressed humanity struggled for its noblest rights, where with the good cause unwonted powers were united, and the resources of resolute despair triumphed in unequal contest over the terrible arts of tyranny.

Great and encouraging is the reflection that there is a resource left us against the arrogant usurpations of despotic power; that its best-contrived plans against the liberty of mankind may be frustrated; that resolute opposition can weaken even the outstretched arm of tyranny; and that heroic perseverance can eventually exhaust its fearful resources. Never did this truth affect me so sensibly as in tracing the history of that memorable rebellion which for ever severed the United Netherlands from the Spanish Crown. Therefore I thought it not unworth the while to attempt to exhibit to the world this grand memorial of social union, in the hope that it may awaken in the breast of my reader a spirit-stirring consciousness of his own powers, and give a new and irrefragable example of what in a good cause men may both dare and venture, and what by union they may accomplish. It is not the extraordinary or heroic features of this event that induce me to describe it. The annals of the world record perhaps many similar enterprises, which may have been even bolder in the conception, and more brilliant in the execution. Some states have fallen after a nobler struggle, others have risen with more exalted strides. Nor are we here to look for eminent heroes, colossal talents, or those marvellous exploits which the history of past times presents in such rich abundance. Those times are gone, such men are no more. In the soft lap of refinement, we have suffered the energetic powers to become enervate which those ages called into action and rendered indispensable. With admiring awe, we wonder at these gigantic images of the past, as a feeble old man gazes on the athletic sports of youth.

Not so, however, in the history before us. The people here presented to our notice were the most peaceful in our quarter of the globe, and less capable than their neighbours of that heroic spirit which stamps a lofty character even on the most insignificant actions. The pressure of circumstances with its peculiar influence surprised them and forced a transitory greatness upon them, which they never could have possessed, and perhaps will never possess again. It is, indeed, exactly this want of heroic grandeur which renders this event peculiarly instructive; and while others aim at showing the superiority of genius over chance, I shall here paint a scene where necessity creates genius, and accident makes heroes.

If, in any case, it be allowable to recognise the intervention of Providence in human affairs, it is certainly so in the present history, its course appears so contradictory to reason and experience. Philip II., the most powerful sovereign of his line—whose dreaded supremacy menaced the independence of Europe—whose treasures surpassed the collective wealth of all the monarchs of Christendom besides—whose ambitious projects were backed by numerous and well-disciplined armies—whose troops, hardened by long and bloody wars, and confident in past victories and in the irresistible prowess of this nation, were eager for any enterprise that promised glory and spoil, and ready to second with prompt obedience the daring genius of their leaders—this dreaded potentate here appears before us obstinately pursuing one favourite project, devoting to it the untiring efforts of a long reign, and bringing all these terrible resources to bear upon it; but forced, in the evening of his days, to abandon it—here we see the mighty Philip II. engaging in combat with a few weak and powerless adversaries, and retiring from it at last with disgrace.

And with what adversaries? Here, a peaceful tribe of fishermen and shepherds, in an almost forgotten corner of Europe, which with difficulty they had rescued from the ocean; the sea their profession, and at once their wealth and their plague; poverty with freedom their highest blessing, their glory, their virtue. There, a harmless, moral, commercial people, revelling in the abundant fruits of thriving industry, and jealous of the maintenance of laws which had proved their benefactors. In the happy leisure of affluence, they forsake the narrow circle of immediate wants, and learn to thirst after higher and nobler gratifications. The new views of truth whose benignant dawn now broke over Europe cast a fertilising beam on this favoured clime, and the free burgher admitted with joy the light which oppressed and miserable slaves shut out. A spirit of independence, which is the ordinary companion of prosperity and freedom, lured this people on to examine the authority of antiquated opinions, and to break an ignominious chain. But the stern rod of despotism was held suspended over them; arbitrary power threatened to tear away the foundation of their happiness; the guardian of their laws became their tyrant. Simple in their statecraft no less than in their manners, they dared to appeal to ancient treaties, and to remind the lord of both Indies of the rights of nature. A name decides the whole issue of things. In Madrid that was called rebellion which in Brussels was simply styled a lawful remonstrance. The complaints of Brabant required a prudent mediator, Philip II. sent an executioner. The signal for war was given. An unparalleled tyranny assailed both property and life. The despairing citizens, to whom the choice of deaths was all that was left, chose the nobler one on the battle-field. A wealthy and luxurious nation loves peace, but becomes warlike as soon as it becomes poor. Then it ceases to tremble for a life which is deprived of everything that had made it desirable. In an instant, the contagion of rebellion seizes at once the most distant provinces; trade and commerce are at a standstill, the ships disappear from the harbours, the artisan abandons his workshop, the rustic his uncultivated fields. Thousands fled to distant lands, a thousand victims fell on the bloody field, and fresh thousands pressed on. Divine, indeed, must that doctrine be for which men could die so joyfully. All that was wanting was the last finishing hand, the enlightened enterprising spirit, to seize on this great political crisis, and to mould the offspring of chance into the ripe creation of wisdom. William the Silent, like a second Brutus, devoted himself to the great cause of liberty. Superior to all selfishness, he resigned honourable offices which entailed on him objectionable duties, and magnanimously divesting himself of all his princely dignities, he descended to a state of voluntary poverty, and became but a citizen of the world

The cause of justice was staked upon the hazardous game of battle; but the newly raised levies of mercenaries and peaceful husbandmen were unable to withstand the terrible onset of an experienced force. Twice did the brave William lead his dispirited troops against the tyrant, twice was he abandoned by them, but not by his courage.

Philip II. sent as many reinforcements as the dreadful importunity of his viceroy demanded. Fugitives, whom their country rejected, sought a new home on the ocean, and turned to the ships of their enemy to satisfy the cravings both of vengeance and of want. Naval heroes were now formed out of corsairs, and a marine collected out of piratical vessels: out of morasses arose a Republic. Seven provinces threw off the yoke at the same time, to form a new, youthful state, powerful by its waters and its union and despair. A solemn decree of the whole nation deposed the tyrant, and the Spanish name was erased from all its laws.

For such acts no forgiveness remained; the Republic became formidable, only because it was impossible for her to retrace her steps. But factions distracted her within without, her terrible element, the sea itself, leaguing with her oppressors, threatened her very infancy with a premature grave. She felt herself succumb to the superior force of the enemy, and cast herself a suppliant before the most powerful thrones of Europe, begging them to accept a dominion which she herself could no longer protect. At last, but with difficulty—so despised at first was this state, that even the rapacity of foreign monarchs spurned her opening bloom—a stranger deigned to accept their importunate offer of a dangerous crown. New hopes began to revive her sinking courage; but in this new father of his country destiny gave her a traitor, and in the critical emergency, when the implacable foe was in full force before her very gates, Charles of Anjou invaded the liberties which he had been called to protect. In the midst of the tempest, too, the assassin's hand tore the steersman from the helm, and with William of Orange the career of the infant Republic was seemingly at an end, and all her guardian angels fled. But the ship continued to scud along before the storm, and the swelling canvas carried her safe without the pilot's help.

Philip II. missed the fruits of a deed which cost him his royal honour, and perhaps, also, his self-respect

Liberty struggled on still with despotism, in obstinate and dubious contest; sanguinary battles were fought; a brilliant array of heroes succeeded each other on the field of glory; and Flanders and Brabant were the schools which educated generals for the coming century. A long, devastating war laid waste the open country; victor and vanquished alike waded through blood; while the rising republic of the waters gave a welcome to fugitive industry, and out of the ruins of despotism erected the noble edifice of its own greatness. For forty years lasted the war whose happy termination was not to bless the dying eye of Philip; which destroyed one Paradise in Europe, to form a new one out of its shattered fragments; which destroyed the choicest flower of military youth, and while it enriched more than a quarter of the globe, impoverished the possessor of the golden Peru. This monarch, who could expend nine hundred tons of gold without oppressing his subjects, and by tyrannical measures extorted far more, heaped moreover on his exhausted people a debt of one hundred and forty millions of ducats. An implacable hatred of liberty swallowed up all these treasures, and consumed on the fruitless task the labour of a royal life. But the Reformation throve amidst the devastations of the sword, and over the blood of her citizens the banner of the new Republic floated victorious.

This improbable turn of affairs seems to border on a miracle; many circumstances, however, combined to break the power of Philip, and to favour the progress of the infant state. Had the whole weight of his power fallen on the United Provinces, there had been no hope for their religion or their liberty. His own ambition, by tempting him to divide his strength, came to the aid of their weakness. The expensive policy of maintaining traitors in every cabinet of Europe; the support of the League in France; the revolt of the Moors in Granada; the conquest of Portugal, and the magnificent fabric of the Escurial, drained at last his apparently inexhaustible treasury, and prevented his acting in the field with spirit and energy. The German and Italian troops, whom the hope of gain alone allured to his banner, mutinied when he could no longer pay them, and faithlessly abandoned their leaders in the decisive moment of action. These terrible instruments of oppression now turned their dangerous power against their employer, and wreaked their vindictive rage on the provinces which remained faithful to him. The unfortunate armament against England, on which, like a desperate gamester, he had staked the whole strength of his kingdom, completed his ruin; with the Armada sank the wealth of the two Indies, and the flower of Spanish chivalry.

But in the very same proportion that the Spanish power declined, the Republic rose in fresh vigour. The ravages which the fanaticism of the new religion, the tyranny of the Inquisition, the furious rapacity of the soldiery, and the miseries of a long war, unbroken by any interval of peace, made in the provinces of Brabant, Flanders, and Hainault, at once the arsenals and the magazines of this expensive contest, naturally rendered it, every year, more difficult to support and recruit the royal armies. The Catholic Netherlands had already lost a million of citizens, and the trodden fields maintained their husbandmen no longer. Spain itself had but few more men to spare. That country, surprised by a sudden affluence, which brought idleness with it, had lost much of its population, and could not long support the continual drafts of men which were required both for the New World and the Netherlands. Of these conscripts, few ever saw their country again; and these few, having left it as youths, returned to it infirm and old. Gold, which had become more common, made soldiers proportionately dearer; the growing charm of effeminacy enhanced the price of the opposite virtues. Wholly different was the posture of affairs with the rebels. The thousands whom the cruelty of the viceroy expelled from the southern Netherlands, the Huguenots whom the wars of persecution drove from France, as well as every one whom constraint of conscience exiled from the other parts of Europe, all alike flocked to unite themselves with the Belgian insurgents. The whole Christian world was their recruiting ground. The fanaticism both of the persecutor and the persecuted worked in their behalf. The enthusiasm of a doctrine newly embraced, revenge, want, and hopeless misery, drew to their standard adventurers from every part of Europe. All whom the new doctrine had won, all who had already suffered, or had still cause of fear from despotism, linked their own fortunes with those of the new Republic. Every injury inflicted by a tyrant gave a right of citizenship in Holland. Men pressed towards a country where liberty raised her spirit-stirring banner, where respect and security were insured to a fugitive religion, and even revenge on the oppressor. If we consider the conflux in the present day of people to Holland, seeking by their entrance upon her territory to be reinvested in their rights as men, what must it have been at a time when the rest of Europe groaned under a heavy bondage, when Amsterdam was nearly the only free port for all opinions? Many hundred families sought a refuge for their wealth in a land which the ocean and domestic concord powerfully combined to protect. The republican army maintained its full complement, without the plough being stripped of hands to work it. Amid the clash of arms, trade and industry flourished; and the peaceful citizen enjoyed in anticipation the fruits of liberty, which foreign blood was to purchase for them. At the very time when the Republic of Holland was struggling for existence, she extended her dominions beyond the ocean, and was quietly occupied in erecting her East Indian empire.

Moreover, Spain maintained this expensive war with dead, unfructifying gold, that never returned into the hand which gave it away, while it raised to her the price of every necessary. The treasuries of the Republic were industry and commerce. Time lessened the one, whilst it multiplied the other, and exactly in the same proportion that the resources of the Spanish government became exhausted by the long continuance of the war, the Republic began to reap a richer harvest. Its field was sown sparingly with choice seed, which bore fruit, though late, yet a hundredfold; but the tree from which Philip gathered fruit was a fallen trunk, which never again became verdant.

Philip's adverse destiny decreed that all the treasures which he lavished for the oppression of the Provinces should contribute to enrich them. The continual outlay of Spanish gold had diffused riches and luxury throughout Europe; but the increasing wants of Europe were supplied chiefly by the Netherlanders, who were masters of the commerce of the known world, and who, by their dealings, fixed the price of all merchandise. Even during the war, Philip could not prohibit his own subjects from trading with the Republic; nay, he could not even desire it. He himself furnished the rebels with the means of defraying the expenses of their own defence; for the very war which was to ruin them increased the sale of their goods. The enormous sums expended on his fleets and armies flowed, for the most part, into the exchequer of the Republic, which was more or less connected with the commercial places of Flanders and Brabant. Whatever Philip attempted against the rebels operated indirectly to their advantage.

The sluggish progress of this war did the king as much injury as it benefited the rebels. His army was composed, for the most part, of the remains of those victorious troops which had gathered their laurels under Charles V. Old and long services entitled them to repose; many of them, whom the war had enriched, impatiently longed for their homes, where they might end in ease a life of hardship. Their former zeal, their heroic spirit, and their discipline, relaxed in the same proportion as they thought they had fully satisfied their honour and their duty, and as they began to reap at last the reward of so many battles. Besides, the troops, which had been accustomed by their irresistible impetuosity to vanquish all opponents, were necessarily wearied out by a war which was carried on not so much against men as against the elements; which exercised their patience more than it gratified their love of glory; and where there was less of danger than of difficulty and want to contend with. Neither personal courage nor long military experience was of avail in a country whose peculiar features gave the most dastardly the advantage. Lastly, a single discomfiture on foreign ground did them more injury than any victories gained over an enemy at home could profit them. With the rebels, the case was exactly the reverse. In so protracted a war, in which no decisive battle took place, the weaker party must naturally learn at last the art of defence from the stronger; slight defeats accustomed him to danger, slight victories animated his confidence.

At the beginning of the war, the republican army scarcely dared to show itself in the field; the long continuance of the struggle practised and hardened it. As the royal armies grew wearied of victory, the confidence of the rebels rose with their improved discipline and experience. At last, at the end of half a century, master and pupil separated, unsubdued, and equal in the fight.

Again, throughout the war the rebels acted with more concord and unanimity than the royalists. Before the former had lost their first leader, the government of the Netherlands had passed through as many as five hands. The Duchess of Parma's indecision soon imparted itself to the cabinet of Madrid, which, in a short time, tried in succession almost every system of policy. Duke Alva's inflexible sternness, the mildness of his successor Requescens, Don John of Austria's insidious cunning, and the active and imperious mind of the Prince of Parma, gave as many opposite directions to the war, while the plan of rebellion remained the same in a single head, who, as he saw it clearly, pursued it with vigour. The king's greatest misfortune was that right principles of action generally missed the right moment of application. In the commencement of the troubles, when the advantage was as yet clearly on the king's side, when prompt resolution and manly firmness might have crushed the rebellion in the cradle, the reins of government were allowed to hang loose in the hands of a woman. After the outbreak had come to an open revolt, and when the strength of the factious and the power of the king stood more equally balanced, and when a skilful flexible prudence could alone have averted the impending civil war, the government devolved on a man who was eminently deficient in this necessary qualification. So watchful an observer as William the Silent failed not to improve every advantage which the faulty policy of his adversary presented, and with quiet silent industry he slowly but surely pushed on the great enterprise to its accomplishment.

But why did not Philip II. himself appear in the Netherlands? Why did he prefer to employ every other means, however improbable, rather than make trial of the only remedy which could insure success? To curb the overgrown power and insolence of the nobility, there was no expedient more natural than the presence of their master. Before royalty itself, all secondary dignities must necessarily have sunk in the shade, all other splendour be dimmed. Instead of the truth being left to flow slowly and obscurely through impure channels to the distant throne, so that procrastinated measures of redress gave time to ripen ebullitions of the moment into acts of deliberation, his own penetrating glance would at once have been able to separate truth from error; and cold policy alone, not to speak of his humanity, would have saved the land a million citizens. The nearer to their source, the more weighty would his edicts have been; the thicker they fell on their objects, the weaker and the more dispirited would have become the efforts of the rebels. It costs infinitely more to do an evil to an enemy in his presence than in his absence. At first the rebellion appeared to tremble at its own name, and long sheltered itself under the ingenious pretext of defending the cause of its sovereign against the arbitrary assumptions of his own viceroy. Philip's appearance in Brussels would have put an end at once to this juggling. In that case, the rebels would have been compelled to act up to their pretence, or to cast aside the mask, and so, by appearing in their true shape, condemn themselves. And what a relief for the Netherlands if the king's presence had only spared them those evils which were inflicted upon them without his knowledge, and contrary to his will. What gain, too, even if it had only enabled him to watch over the expenditure of the vast sums which, illegally raised on the plea of meeting the exigencies of the war, disappeared in the plundering hands of his deputies.

What the latter were compelled to extort by the unnatural expedient of terror, the nation would have been disposed to grant to the sovereign majesty. That which made his ministers detested would have rendered the monarch feared; for the abuse of hereditary power is less painfully oppressive than the abuse of delegated authority. His presence would have saved his exchequer thousands, had he been nothing more than an economical despot; and even had he been less, the awe of his person would have preserved a territory which was lost through hatred and contempt for his instruments.

In the same manner, as the oppression of the people of the Netherlands excited the sympathy of all who valued their own rights, it might have been expected that their disobedience and defection would have been a call to all princes to maintain their own prerogatives in the case of their neighbours. But jealousy of Spain got the better of political sympathies, and the first powers of Europe arranged themselves more or less openly on the side of freedom.

Although bound to the house of Spain by the ties of relationship, the Emperor Maximilian II. gave it just cause for its charge against him of secretly favouring the rebels. By the offer of his mediation he implicitly acknowledged the partial justice of their complaints, and thereby encouraged them to a resolute perseverance in their demands. Under an emperor sincerely devoted to the interests of the Spanish house, William of Orange could scarcely have drawn so many troops and so much money from Germany. France, without openly and formally breaking the peace, placed a Prince of the Blood at the head of the Netherlandish rebels; and it was with French gold and French troops that the operations of the latter were chiefly conducted. Elizabeth of England, too, did but exercise a just retaliation and revenge in protecting the rebels against their legitimate sovereign; and although her meagre and sparing aid availed no farther than to ward off utter ruin from the Republic, still even this was infinitely valuable, at a moment when nothing but hope could have supported their exhausted courage. With both these powers, Philip at the time was at peace, but both betrayed him. Between the weak and the strong, honesty often ceases to appear a virtue; the delicate ties which bind equals are seldom observed towards him whom all men fear. Philip had banished truth from political intercourse; he himself had dissolved all morality between kings, and had made artifice the divinity of cabinets. Without once enjoying the advantages of his preponderating greatness, he had, throughout life, to contend with the jealousy which it awakened in others. Europe made him atone for the possible abuses of a power of which in fact he never had the full possession.

If against the disparity between the two combatants, which, at first sight, is so astounding, we weigh all the incidental circumstances which were adverse to Spain, but favourable to the Netherlands, that which is supernatural in this event will disappear, while that which is extraordinary will still remain—and a just standard will be furnished by which to estimate the real merit of these republicans in working out their freedom. It must not, however, be thought that so accurate a calculation of the opposing forces could have preceded the undertaking itself, or that, on entering this unknown sea, they already knew the shore on which they would ultimately be landed. The work did not present itself to the mind of its originator in the exact form which it assumed when completed, any more than the mind of Luther foresaw the eternal separation of creeds when he began to oppose the sale of indulgences. What a difference between the modest procession of these suitors in Brussels, who prayed for a more humane treatment as a favour, and the dreaded majesty of a free state, which treated with kings as equals, and in less than a century disposed of the throne of its former tyrant. The unseen hand of fate gave to the discharged arrow a higher flight, and quite a different direction from that which it first received from the bowstring. In the womb of happy Brabant that liberty had its birth which, torn from its mother in its earliest infancy, was to gladden the so despised Holland. But the enterprise must not be less thought of because its issue differed from the first design. Man works up, smooths, and fashions the rough stone which the times bring to him; the moment and the instant may belong to him, but accident developes the history of the world. If the passions which co-operated actively in bringing about this event were only not unworthy of the great work to which they were unconsciously subservient—if only the powers which aided in its accomplishment were intrinsically noble, if only the single actions out of whose concatenation it wonderfully arose were beautiful and great, then is the event grand, interesting, and fruitful for us, and we are at liberty to wonder at the bold offspring of chance, or rather offer up our admiration to a higher Intelligence.

The history of the world, like the laws of nature, is consistent with itself, and simple as the soul of man. Like conditions produce like phenomena. On the same soil where now the Netherlanders were to resist their Spanish tyrants, their forefathers, the Batavi and Belgæ, fifteen centuries before, combated against their Roman oppressors. Like the former, submitting reluctantly to a haughty master, and misgoverned by rapacious satraps, they broke off their chain with like resolution, and tried their fortune in a similar unequal combat. The same pride of conquest, the same national grandeur, marked the Spaniard of the sixteenth century and the Roman of the first; the same valour and discipline distinguished the armies of both, their battle array inspired the same terror. There, as here, we see stratagem in combat with superior force, and firmness, strengthened by unanimity, wearying out a mighty power weakened by division; then, as now, private hatred armed a whole nation; a single man, born for his times, revealed to his fellow-slaves the dangerous secret of their power, and brought their mute grief to a bloody announcement. "Confess, Batavians," cries Claudius Civilis to his countrymen in the sacred grove, "we are no longer treated, as formerly, by these Romans, as allies, but rather as slaves. We are handed over to their prefects and centurions, who, when satiated with our plunder and with our blood, make way for others, who, under different names, renew the same outrages. If even at last Rome deigns to send us a legate, he oppresses us with an ostentatious and costly retinue, and with still more intolerable pride. The levies are again at hand which tear for ever children from their parents, brothers from brothers. Now, Batavians, is our time. Never did Rome lie so prostrate as now. Let not their names of legions terrify you, there is nothing in their camps but old men and plunder. Our infantry and horsemen are strong; Germany is allied to us by blood, and Gaul is ready to throw off its yoke. Let Syria serve them, and Asia and the East, who are used to bow before kings; many still live who were born among us, before tribute was paid to the Romans. The gods are ever with the brave." Solemn religious rites hallowed this conspiracy, like the League of the Gueux; like that, it craftily wrapped itself in the veil of submissiveness, in the majesty of a great name. The cohorts of Civilis swear allegiance on the Rhine to Vespasian in Syria, as the league did to Philip II. The same arena furnished the same plan of defence, the same refuge to despair. Both confided their wavering fortunes to a friendly element; in the same distress, Civilis preserves his island, as fifteen centuries after him William of Orange did the town of Leyden—through an artificial inundation. The valour of the Batavi disclosed the impotency of the world's ruler, as the noble courage of their descendants revealed to the whole of Europe the decay of Spanish greatness. The same fecundity of genius in the generals of both times gave to the war a similarly obstinate continuance, and nearly as doubtful an issue; one difference, nevertheless, distinguishes them: the Romans and Batavians fought humanely, for they did not fight for religion.

BOOK I.

EARLIER HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS UP TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Before we consider the immediate history of this great revolution, it will be advisable to go a few steps back into the ancient records of the country, and to trace the origin of that constitution, which we find it possessed of, at the time of this remarkable change.

The first appearance of this people, in the history of the world, is the moment of its fall; their conquerors first gave them a political existence. The extensive region, which is bounded by Germany on the east, on the south by France, on the north and north-west by the North Sea, and which we comprehend under the general name of the Netherlands, was, at the time when the Romans invaded Gaul, divided amongst three principal nations, all originally of German descent, German institutions, and German spirit. The Rhine formed its boundaries. On the left of the river dwelt the Belgæ, on its right the Frisii, and the Batavi on the island which its two arms then formed with the ocean. All these several nations were sooner or later reduced into subjection by the Romans, but their conquerors themselves give us the most glorious testimony to their valour. The Belgæ, writes Cæsar, were the only people amongst the Gauls who repulsed the invasion of the Teutones and Cimbri. The Batavi, Tacitus tells us, surpassed all the tribes on the Rhine in bravery. This fierce nation paid its tribute in soldiers, and was reserved by its conquerors, like arrow and sword, only for battle The Romans themselves acknowledged the Batavian horsemen to be their best cavalry. Like the Swiss at this day, they formed for a long time the body guard of the Roman Emperor; their wild courage terrified the Dacians, as they saw them, in full armour, swimming across the Danube. The Batavi accompanied Agricola in his expedition against Britain, and helped him to conquer that island. The Frieses were, of all, the last subdued, and the first to regain their liberty. The morasses among which they dwelt, attracted the conquerors later, and enhanced the price of conquest.

The Roman Drusus, who made war in these regions, had a canal cut from the Rhine into the Flevo, the present Zuyder Zee, through which the Roman fleet penetrated into the North Sea, and from thence, entering the mouths of the Ems and the Weser, found an easy passage into the interior of Germany.

Through four centuries, we find Batavian troops in the Roman armies, but after the time of Honorius, their name disappears from history. Presently we discover their island overrun by the Franks, who again lost themselves in the adjoining country of Belgium. The Frieses threw off the yoke of their distant and powerless rulers, and again appeared as a free, and even a conquering people, who governed themselves by their own customs and a remnant of Roman laws, and extended their limits beyond the left bank of the Rhine. Of all the provinces of the Netherlands, Friesland, especially, had suffered the least from the irruptions of strange tribes, and foreign customs; and for centuries retained traces of its original institutions of its national spirit and manners, which have not, even at the present day, entirely disappeared.

The epoch of the immigration of nations, destroyed the original form of most of these tribes; other mixed races arose in their place, with other constitutions. In the general irruption, the towns and encampments of the Romans disappeared, and with them, the memorials of their wise government, which they had employed the natives to execute. The neglected dikes once more yielded to the violence of the streams, and to the encroachments of the ocean. Those wonders of labour, and creations of human skill, the canals, dried up, the rivers changed their course, the continent and the sea confounded their olden limits, and the nature of the soil changed with its inhabitants. So, too, the connexion of the two eras seems effaced, and with a new race a new history commences.

The monarchy of the Franks, which arose out of the ruins of Roman Gaul, had, in the 6th and 7th centuries, seized all the provinces of the Netherlands, and planted there the Christian faith. After an obstinate war, Charles Martel subdued to the French crown Friesland, the last of all the free provinces and by his victories, paved a way for the gospel. Charlemagne united all these countries, and formed of them one division of the mighty empire, which he had constructed out of Germany, France, and Lombardy. As under his descendants, this vast dominion was again torn into fragments, so the Netherlands became at times German, at others French, or then again Lotheringian Provinces, and at last we find them under both the names of Friesland and Lower Lotheringia.

With the Franks, the feudal system, the offspring of the North, also came into these lands, and here, too, as in all other countries, it degenerated. The more powerful vassals gradually made themselves independent of the crown, and the royal governors usurped the countries they were appointed to govern. But the rebellious vassals could not maintain their usurpations, without the aid of their own dependants, whose assistance they were compelled to purchase by new concessions. At the same time, the church became powerful through pious usurpations and donations, and in its abbey lands and episcopal sees acquired an independent existence. Thus were the Netherlands, in the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, split up into several small sovereignties, whose possessors did homage, at one time to the German Emperor, at another to the Kings of France. By purchase, marriages, legacies, and also by conquest, several of these provinces were often united under one suzerain, and thus in the fifteenth century, we see the house of Burgundy in possession of the chief part of the Netherlands. With more or less right, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had united as many as eleven provinces under his authority, and to these his son, Charles the Bold, added two others, acquired by force of arms. Thus imperceptibly a new state arose in Europe, which wanted nothing but the name, to be the most flourishing kingdom in this quarter of the globe. These extensive possessions made the Dukes of Burgundy formidable neighbours to France, and tempted the restless spirit of Charles the Bold to devise a scheme of conquest, embracing the whole line of country from the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Rhine down to Alsace. The almost inexhaustible resources of this prince, justify in some measure this bold project. A formidable army threatened to carry it into execution. Already Switzerland trembled for her liberty; but deceitful fortune abandoned him in three terrible battles, and the infatuated hero was lost in the mélée of the living and the dead *.

The sole heiress of Charles the Bold, Maria, at once the richest princess and the unhappy Helen of that time, whose wooing brought misery on her inheritance, was now the centre of attraction to the whole known world. Among her suitors appeared two great princes, King Louis XI. of France, for his son, the young Dauphin, and Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederic III. The successful suitor was to become the most powerful prince in Europe; and now, for the first time, this quarter of the globe began to fear for its balance of power. Louis, the more powerful of the two, was ready to back his suit by force of arms; but the people of the Netherlands, who disposed of the hand of their princess, passed by this dreaded neighbour, and decided in favour of Maximilian, whose more remote territories, and more limited power, seemed less to threaten the liberty of their country. A deceitful, unfortunate policy, which, through a strange dispensation of heaven, only accelerated the melancholy fate which it was intended to prevent.

To Philip the Fair, the son of Maria and Maximilian, a Spanish bride brought, as her portion, that extensive kingdom which Ferdinand and Isabella had recently founded; and Charles of Austria, his son, was born lord of the kingdoms of Spain, of the two Sicilies, of the new world, and of the Netherlands. In the latter country, the commonalty emancipated themselves much earlier than in other feudal states, and quickly attained to an independent political existence. The favourable situation of the country on the North Sea, and on great navigable rivers, early awakened the spirit of commerce, which rapidly peopled the towns, encouraged industry and

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* A page who had seen him fall, a few days after the battle conducted the victors to the spot, and saved his remains from an ignominious oblivion. His body was dragged from out of a pool in which it was fast frozen, naked, and so disfigured with wounds, that with great difficulty he was recognised, by the well-known deficiency of some of his teeth, and by remarkably long finger nails. But that, notwithstanding these marks, there were still incredulous people who doubted his death, and looked for his re-appearance, is proved by the missive, in which Louis the Eleventh called upon the Burgundian States to return to their allegiance to the Crown of France. "If," the passage runs, "Duke Charles should still be living, you shall be released from your oath to me." Comines, t. iii., Preuves des Mémoires, 495, 497.

the arts, attracted foreigners, and diffused prosperity and affluence among them. However contemptuously the warlike policy of those times looked down upon every peaceful and useful occupation, the rulers of the country could not fail altogether to perceive the essential advantages they derived from such pursuits. The increasing population of their territories, the different imposts which they extorted from natives and foreigners, under the various titles of tolls, customs, highway rates, escort money, bridge tolls, market fees, escheats, and so forth, were too valuable considerations to allow them to remain indifferent to the sources from which they were derived. Their own rapacity made them promoters of trade, and as often happens, barbarism itself rudely nursed it, until, at last, a healthier policy assumed its place. In the course of time, they invited the Lombard merchants to settle among them, and accorded to the towns some valuable privileges, and an independent jurisdiction, by which the latter acquired uncommon extraordinary credit and influence. The numerous wars which the counts and dukes carried on with one another, or with their neighbours, made them in some measure dependent on the good will of the towns, who, by their wealth, obtained weight and consideration, and for the subsidies which they afforded, failed not to extort important privileges in return. These privileges of the commonalties increased, as the crusades with their expensive equipment augmented the necessities of the nobles; as a new road to Europe was opened for the productions of the East; and as wide-spreading luxury created new wants to their princes. Thus, as early as the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we find in these lands a mixed form of government, in which the prerogative of the sovereign is greatly limited by the privileges of the estates, that is to say, of the nobility, the clergy, and the municipalities. These, under the name of States, assembled as often as the wants of the province required it. Without their consent, no new laws were valid, no war could be carried on, and no taxes levied, no change made in the coinage, and no foreigner admitted to any office of government. All the provinces enjoyed these privileges in common; others were peculiar to the various districts. The supreme government was hereditary, but the son did not enter on the rights of his father, before he had solemnly sworn to maintain the existing constitution.

Necessity is the first lawgiver: all the wants which had to be met by this constitution, were originally of a commercial nature. Thus the whole constitution was founded on commerce, and the laws of the nation were adapted to its pursuits. The last clause, which excluded foreigners from all offices of trust, was a natural consequence of the preceding articles. So complicated and artificial a relation between the sovereign and his people, which in many provinces was further modified, according to the peculiar wants of each, and frequently of some single city, required for its maintenance the liveliest zeal for the liberties of the country, combined with an intimate acquaintance with them. From a foreigner, neither could well be expected. This law besides, was enforced reciprocally in each particular province; so that in Brabant no Fleming, in Zealand no Hollander, could hold office; and it continued in force, even after all these provinces were united under one government.

Above all others, Brabant enjoyed the highest degree of freedom. Its privileges were esteemed so valuable, that many mothers from the adjacent provinces removed thither about the time of their accouchement, in order to entitle their children to participate, by birth, in all the immunities of that favoured country; just as, says Strada, one improves the plants of a rude climate by removing them to the soil of a milder.

After the House of Burgundy had united several provinces under its dominion, the separate provincial assemblies which, up to that time, had been independent tribunals, were made subject to a supreme court at Malines, which incorporated the various judicatures into one body, and decided in the last resort all civil and criminal appeals. The separate independence of the provinces was thus abolished, and the supreme power vested in the senate at Malines.

After the death of Charles the Bold, the states did not neglect to avail themselves of the embarassment of their Duchess, who, threatened by France, was consequently in their power. Holland and Zealand compelled her to sign a great charter, which secured to them the most important sovereign rights. The people of Ghent carried their insolence to such a pitch, that they arbitrarily dragged the favourites of Maria, who had the misfortune to displease them, before their own tribunals, and beheaded them before the eyes of that princess. During the short government of the Duchess Maria, from her father's death to her marriage, the commons obtained powers which few free states enjoyed. After her death, her husband, Maximilian, illegally assumed the government as guardian of his son. Offended by this invasion of their rights, the estates refused to acknowledge his authority, and could only be brought to receive him as a viceroy for a stated period, and under conditions ratified by oath.

Maximilian, after he became Roman Emperor, fancied that he might safely venture to violate the constitution. He imposed extraordinary taxes on the provinces, gave official appointments to Burgundians and Germans, and introduced foreign troops into the provinces. But the jealousy of these republicans kept pace with the power of their regent. As he entered Bruges with a large retinue of foreigners, the people flew to arms, made themselves masters of his person, and placed him in confinement in the castle. In spite of the intercession of the Imperial and Roman courts, he did not again obtain his freedom, until security had been given to the people on all the disputed points.

The security of life and property, arising from mild laws, and an equal administration of justice, had encouraged activity and industry. In continual contest with the ocean and rapid rivers, which poured their violence on the neighbouring lowlands, and whose force it was requisite to break by embankments and canals, this people had early learnt to observe the natural objects around them; by industry and perseverance to defy an element of superior power; and like the Egyptian, instructed by his Nile, to exercise their inventive genius and acuteness in self-defence. The natural fertility of their soil, which favoured agriculture and the breeding of cattle, tended at the same time to increase the population. Their happy position on the sea and the great navigable rivers of Germany and France, many of which debouched on their coasts; the numerous artificial canals which intersected the land in all directions, imparted life to navigation: and the facility of internal communication between the provinces, soon created, and fostered, a commercial spirit among these people.

The neighbouring coasts, Denmark and Britain, were the first visited by their vessels. The English wool which they brought back, employed thousands of industrious hands in Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp; and as early as the middle of the twelfth century, cloths of Flanders were extensively worn in France and Germany. In the eleventh century we find ships of Friesland in the Belt, and even in the Levant. This enterprising people ventured, without a compass, to steer under the North Pole, round to the most northerly point of Russia. From the Wendish towns, the Netherlands received a share in the Levant trade, which, at that time, still passed from the Black Sea, through the Russian territories to the Baltic. When, in the thirteenth century, this trade began to decline, the Crusades having opened a new road through the Mediterranean for Indian merchandize, and after the Italian towns had usurped this lucrative branch of commerce, and the great Hanseatic league had been formed in Germany, the Netherlands became the most important emporium between the north and south. As yet, the use of the compass was not general, and the merchantmen sailed slowly and laboriously along the coasts. The ports on the Baltic were, during the winter months, for the most part frozen and inaccessible. Ships, therefore, which could not well accomplish within the year the long voyage from the Mediterranean to the Belt, gladly availed themselves of harbours which lay half way between the two. With an immense continent behind them, with which navigable streams kept up their communication, and towards the west and north open to the ocean by commodious harbours, this country appeared to be expressly formed for a place of resort for different nations, and for a centre of commerce. The principal towns of the Netherlands were established marts. Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, French, Britons, Germans, Danes, and Swedes, thronged to them with the produce of every country in the world. Competition ensured cheapness; industry was stimulated, as it found a ready market for its productions. With the necessary exchange of money, arose the commerce in bills, which opened a new and fruitful source of wealth The princes of the country, acquainted at last with their true interest, encouraged the merchant by important immunities, and neglected not to protect their commerce by advantageous treaties with foreign powers. When, in the fifteenth century, several provinces were united under one rule, they discontinued their private wars, which had proved so injurious, and their separate interests were now more intimately connected by a common government. Their commerce and affluence prospered in the lap of a long peace, which the formidable power of their princes extorted from the neighbouring monarchs. The Burgundian flag was feared in every sea, the dignity of their sovereign gave support to their undertakings, and the enterprise of a private individual became the affair of a powerful state. Such vigorous protection soon placed them in a position even to renounce the Hanseatic league, and to pursue this daring enemy through every sea. The Hanseatic merchants, against whom the coasts of Spain were closed, were compelled at last, however reluctantly, to visit the Flemish fairs, and purchase their Spanish goods in the markets of the Netherlands.

Bruges, in Flanders, was, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the central point of the whole commerce of Europe, and the great market of all nations. In the year 1468, a hundred and fifty merchant vessels were counted entering the harbour of Sluys at one time. Besides the rich factories of the Hanseatic league, there were here fifteen trading companies, with their counting houses, and many factories and merchants' families from every European country. Here was established the market of all northern products for the south, and of all southern and Levantine products for the north. These passed through the Sound, and up the Rhine, in Hanseatic vessels to Upper Germany, or were transported by land carriage to Brunswick and Luneburg.

As in the common course of human affairs, so here also, a licentious luxury followed prosperity. The seductive example of Philip the Good, could not but accelerate its approach. The court of the Burgundian dukes was the most voluptuous and magnificent in Europe, Italy itself not excepted. The costly dress of the higher classes, which afterwards served as patterns to the Spaniards, and eventually, with other Burgundian customs, passed over to the court of Austria, soon descended to the lower orders, and the meanest citizen nursed his person in velvet and silk *.

Comines, an author who travelled through the Netherlands, about the middle of the fifteenth century, tells us that pride had already attended their prosperity. The pomp and vanity of dress was carried by both sexes to extravagance. The luxury of the table had never reached so great a height among any other people. The immoral assemblage of both sexes at bathing places, and such other places of reunion for pleasure and enjoyment, had banished all shame—and we are not here speaking of the usual luxuriousness of the higher ranks; the females of the common class abandoned themselves to such extravagances without limit or measure.

But how much more cheering to the philanthropist is this extravagance, than the miserable frugality of want, and the barbarous virtues of ignorance, which at that time oppressed nearly the whole of Europe! The Burgundian era shines pleasingly forth from those dark ages, like a lovely spring day amid the showers of February. But this flourishing condition, tempted the Flemish towns at last to their ruin; Ghent and Bruges, giddy with liberty and success, declared war against Philip the Good, the ruler of eleven provinces, which ended as unfortunately as it was presumptuously commenced. Ghent alone lost many thousand men in an engagement near Havre, and was compelled to appease the wrath of the victor by a contribution of 400,000 gold florins. All the municipal functionaries, and two thousand of the principal

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* Philip the Good was too profuse a prince to amass treasures; nevertheless, Charles the Bold found accumulated among his effects, a greater store of table services, jewels, carpets, and linen than three rich princedoms of that time together possessed, and over and above all, a treasure of three hundred thousand dollars in ready money. The riches of this prince, and of the Burgundian people, lay exposed on the battle fields of Granson, Murten, and Nancy. Here, a Swiss soldier drew from the finger of Charles the Bold that celebrated diamond, which was long esteemed the largest in Europe, which, even now, sparkles in the crown of France as the second in size, but which the unwitting finder sold for a florin. The Swiss exchanged the silver they found for tin, and the gold for copper, and tore into pieces the costly tents of cloth of gold. The value of the spoil of silver, gold, and jewels which was taken, has been estimated at three millions. Charles and his army had advanced to the combat, not like foes who purpose battle, but like conquerors who adorn themselves after victory.

citizens, went, stript to their shirts, bare-footed, and with heads uncovered, a mile out of the town to meet the duke, and on their knees supplicated for pardon. On this occasion, they were deprived of several valuable privileges, an irreparable loss for their future commerce. In the year 1482, they engaged in a war, with no better success, against Maximilian of Austria, with a view to deprive him of the guardianship of his son, which, in contravention of his charter, he had unjustly assumed. In 1487, the town of Bruges placed the Archduke himself in confinement, and put some of his most eminent ministers to death. To avenge his son, the Emperor Frederick III. entered their territory with an army, and blockading for ten years the harbour of Sluys, put a stop to their entire trade. On this occasion, Amsterdam and Antwerp, whose jealousy had long been roused by the flourishing condition of the Flemish towns, lent him the most important assistance. The Italians began to bring their own silk stuffs to Antwerp for sale, and the Flemish cloth-workers likewise, who had settled in England, sent their goods thither; and thus the town of Bruges lost two important branches of trade. The Hanseatic League had long been offended at their overweening pride; and it now left them, and removed its factory to Antwerp. In the year 1516, all the foreign merchants left the town, except only a few Spaniards; but its prosperity faded as slowly as it had bloomed.

Antwerp received, in the sixteenth century, the trade which the luxuriousness of the Flemish towns had banished; and under the government of Charles V., Antwerp was the most stirring and splendid city in the Christian world. A stream like the Scheldt, whose broad mouth, in the immediate vicinity, shared with the North Sea the ebb and flow of the tide, and could carry vessels of the largest tonnage under the walls of Antwerp, made it the natural resort for all vessels which visited that coast. Its free fairs attracted men of business from all countries *. The industry of the nation had, in the beginning of this century, reached its greatest height. The culture of grain, flax, the breeding of cattle, the chase, and fisheries, enriched the peasant; arts, manufactures, and trade,

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* Two such fairs lasted forty days, and all the goods sold there were duty free.

gave wealth to the burghers. Flemish and Brabantine manufactures were long to be seen in Arabia, Persia, and India. Their ships covered the ocean, and, in the Black Sea, contended with the Genoese for supremacy. It was the distinctive characteristic of the seaman of the Netherlands, that he made sail at all seasons of the year, and never laid up for the winter.

When the new route by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, and the East India trade of Portugal undermined that of the Levant, the Netherlands did not feel the blow which was inflicted on the Italian republics. The Portuguese established their mart in Brabant, and the spices of Calicut were displayed for sale in the markets of Antwerp. Hither poured the West Indian merchandize, with which the indolent pride of Spain repaid the industry of the Netherlands. The East Indian market attracted the most celebrated commercial houses from Florence, Lucca, and Genoa; and the Fuggers and Welsers from Augsburg. Here the Hanse towns brought the wares of the north, and here the English company had a factory. Here art and nature seemed to expose to view all their riches; it was a splendid exhibition of the works of the Creator and of the creature.

Their renown soon diffused itself through the world. Even a company of Turkish merchants, towards the end of this century, solicited permission to settle here, and to supply the products of the East by way of Greece. With the trade in goods, they held also the exchange of money. Their bills passed current in the farthest parts of the globe. Antwerp, it is asserted, then transacted more extensive and more important business in a single month, than Venice, at its most flourishing period, in two whole years.

In the year 1491, the Hanseatic League held its solemn meetings in this town, which had formerly assembled in Lubeck alone. In 1531, the exchange was erected, at that time the most splendid in all Europe, and which fulfilled its proud inscription. The town now reckoned 100,000 inhabitants. The tide of human beings, which incessantly poured into it, exceeds all belief. Between 200 and 250 ships were often seen loading at one time in its harbour; no day passed, on which the boats entering inwards and outwards did not amount to more than 500; on market days, the number amounted to 800 or 900. Daily, more than two hundred carriages drove through its gates; above two thousand loaded waggons arrived every week from Germany, France, and Lorraine, without reckoning the farmers' carts and corn-vans, which were seldom less than 10,000 in number. Thirty thousand hands were employed by the English company alone. The market dues, tolls, and excise, brought millions to the government annually. We can form some idea of the resources of the nation, from the fact, that the extraordinary taxes which they were obliged to pay to Charles V., towards his numerous wars, were computed at forty millions of gold ducats.

For this affluence, the Netherlands were as much indebted to their liberty, as to the natural advantages of their country. Uncertain laws, and the despotic sway of a rapacious prince, would quickly have blighted all the blessings, which propitious nature had so abundantly lavished on them. The inviolable sanctity of the laws, can alone secure to the citizen the fruits of his industry, and inspire him with that happy confidence which is the soul of all activity.

The genius of this people, developed by the spirit of commerce, and by the intercourse with so many nations, shone in useful inventions; in the lap of abundance and liberty, all the noble arts were carefully cultivated, and carried to perfection. From Italy, to which Cosmo de Medici had lately restored its golden age, painting, architecture, and the arts of carving and of engraving on copper, were transplanted into the Netherlands, where, in a new soil, they flourished with fresh vigour The Flemish school, a daughter of the Italian, soon vied with its mother for the prize; and, in common with it, gave laws to the whole of Europe in the fine arts. The manufactures and arts, on which the Netherlanders principally founded their prosperity, and still partly base it, require no particular enumeration. The weaving of tapestry, oil painting, the art of painting on glass, even pocket-watches and sun-dials, were, as Guicciardini asserts, originally invented in the Netherlands. To them, we are indebted for the improvement of the compass, the points of which are still known by Flemish names. About the year 1430, the invention of typography is ascribed to Laurence Koster, of Haarlem; and whether or not he is entitled to this honourable distinction, certain it is that the Dutch were among the first to engraft this useful art among them; and fate ordained that a century later it should reward its country with liberty. The people of the Netherlands united, with the most fertile genius for inventions, a happy talent for improving the discoveries of others; there are probably few mechanical arts and manufactures which they did not either produce, or at least carry to a higher degree of perfection.

THE NETHERLANDS UNDER CHARLES THE FIFTH.

Up to this time, these provinces had formed the most enviable state in Europe. Not one of the Burgundian dukes had ventured to indulge a thought of overturning the constitution; it had remained sacred, even to the daring spirit of Charles the Bold, while he was preparing fetters for foreign liberty. All these princes grew up with no higher hope than to be the heads of a republic, and none of their territories afforded them experience of a higher authority. Besides, these princes possessed nothing but what the Netherlands gave them; no armies but those which the nation sent into the field; no riches but what the estates granted to them. Now all was changed. The Netherlands had fallen to a master, who had at his command other instruments and other resources, who could arm against them a foreign power *.

* The unnatural union of two such different nations as the Belgians and Spaniards, could not possibly be prosperous. I cannot here refrain from quoting the comparison which Grotius, in energetic language, has drawn between the two. "With the neighbouring nations," says he, "the people of the Netherlands could easily maintain a good understanding, for they were of a similar origin with themselves, and had grown up in the same manner. But the people of Spain and of the Netherlands, differed in almost every respect from one another, and therefore, when they were brought together, clashed the more violently. Both had, for many centuries, been distinguished in war, only the latter had, in luxurious repose, become disused to arms, while the former had been inured to war in the Italian and African campaigns; the desire of gain made the Belgians more inclined to peace, but not less sensitive of offence. No people were more free from the lust of conquest, but none defended its own more zealously. Hence, the numerous towns, closely pressed together in a confined tract of country; densely crowded with a foreign and native population; fortified near the sea and the great rivers. Hence, for eight centuries after the northern immigration, foreign arms could not prevail against them. Spain, on the contrary, often changed its masters; and when at last, it fell into the hands of the Goths,

Charles V. was an absolute monarch in his Spanish dominions; in the Netherlands, he was no more than the first citizen. In the southern portion of his empire, he might have learned contempt for the rights of individuals; here, he was taught to respect them. The more he there tasted the pleasures of unlimited power, and the higher he raised his opinion of his own greatness, the more reluctant he must have felt to descend elsewhere to the ordinary level of humanity, and to tolerate any check upon his arbitrary authority. It requires, indeed, no ordinary degree of virtue to abstain from warring against the power which imposes a curb on our most cherished wishes.

The superior power of Charles awakened, at the same time, in the Netherlanders, that distrust which always accompanies inferiority. Never were they so alive to their constitutional rights, never so jealous of the royal prerogative, or more observant in their proceedings. Under his reign, we see the most violent outbreaks of republican spirit, and the pretensions of the people carried to an excess, which nothing but the increasing encroachments of the royal power could in

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its character and its manners had suffered more or less from each new conqueror. The people thus formed, at last, out of these several admixtures, is described as patient in labour, imperturbable in danger, equally eager for riches and honour, proud of itself even to contempt of others, devout and grateful to strangers for any act of kindness, but also revengeful, and of such ungovernable passions in victory, as to regard neither conscience nor honour in the case of an enemy. All this is foreign to the character of the Belgian, who is astute but not insidious, who, placed midway between France and Germany, combines in moderation the faults and good qualities of both. He is not easily imposed upon, nor is he to be insulted with impunity. In veneration for the Deity, too, he does not yield to the Spaniard; the arms of the north-men could not make him apostatise from Christianity, when he had once professed it. No opinion which the church condemns, had, up to this time, empoisoned the purity of his faith. Nay, his pious extravagance went so far, that it became requisite to curb by laws the rapacity of his clergy. In both people, loyalty to their rulers is equally innate, with this difference, that the Belgian places the law above kings. Of all the Spaniards, the Castilians require to be governed with the most caution; but the liberties which they arrogate for themselves, they do not willingly accord to others. Hence, the difficult task to their common ruler, so to distribute his attention and care between the two nations, that neither the preference shown to the Castilian should offend the Belgian, nor the equal treatment of the Belgian affront the haughty spirit of the Castilian.' Grotii Annal. Belg. L. 1. 4 5. seq.

the least justify. A sovereign will always regard the freedom of the citizen as an alienated fief, which he is bound to recover To the citizen, the authority of the sovereign is a torrent which, by its inundation, threatens to sweep away his rights The Belgians sought to protect themselves against the ocean by embankments, and against their princes by constitutional enactments. The whole history of the world is a perpetually recurring struggle between liberty and the lust of power and possession; as the history of nature is nothing but the contest of the elements and organic bodies for space. The Netherlands soon found to their cost, that they had become but a province of a great monarchy. So long as their former masters had no higher aim than to promote their prosperity, their condition resembled the tranquil happiness of a secluded family, whose head is its ruler. Charles V. introduced them upon the arena of the political world. They now formed a member of that gigantic body, which the ambition of an individual employed as his instrument. They ceased to have their own good for their aim; the centre of their existence was transported to the soul of their ruler. As his whole government was but one tissue of plans and manœuvres to advance his power, so it was, above all things, necessary that he should be completely master of the various limbs of his mighty empire, in order to move them effectually and suddenly. It was impossible, therefore, for him to embarrass himself with the tiresome mechanism of their interior political organization, or to extend to their peculiar privileges the conscientious respect which their republican jealousy demanded. It was expedient for him to facilitate the exercise of their powers, by concentration and unity. The tribunal at Malines had been, under his predecessor, an independent court of judicature; he subjected its decrees to the revision of a royal council, which he established in Brussels, and which was the mere organ of his will. He introduced foreigners into the most vital functions of their constitution, and confided to them the most important offices. These men, whose only support was the royal favour, would be but bad guardians of privileges which, moreover, were little known to them. The ever increasing expenses of his warlike government, compelled him as steadily to augment his resources. In disregard of their most sacred privileges, he imposed new and strange taxes on the provinces. To preserve their olden consideration, the estates were forced to grant what he had been so modest as not to extort; the whole history of the government of this monarch, in the Netherlands, is almost one continued list of imposts demanded, refused, and finally accorded. Contrary to the constitution, he introduced foreign troops into their territories, directed the recruiting of his armies in the provinces, and involved them in wars which could not advance, even if they did not injure their interest, and to which they had not given their consent. He punished the offences of a free state as amonarch; and the terrible chastisement of Ghent, announced to the other provinces, the great change which their constitution had already undergone.

The welfare of the country was so far secured, as was necessary to the political schemes of its master; the intelligent policy of Charles would certainly not violate the salutary regimen of the body, whose energies he found himself necessitated to exert. Fortunately, the opposite pursuits of selfish ambition, and of disinterested philanthropy, often bring about the same end; and the well-being of a state, which a Marcus Aurelius might propose to himself as a rational object of pursuit, is occasionally promoted by an Augustus or a Louis.

Charles V. was perfectly aware that commerce was the strength of the nation, and that the foundation of their commerce was liberty. He spared its liberty, because he needed its strength. Of greater political wisdom, though not more just than his son, he adapted his principles to the exigencies of time and place, and recalled an ordinance in Antwerp and in Madrid, which he would under other circumstances have enforced with all the terrors of his power. That which makes the reign of Charles V. particularly remarkable, in regard to the Netherlands, is the great religious revolution which occurred under it; and which, as the principal cause of the subsequent rebellion, demands a somewhat circumstantial notice. This it was, that first brought arbitrary power into the innermost sanctuary of the constitution; taught it to give a dreadful specimen of its might; and, in a measure, legalized it, while it placed republican spirit on a dangerous eminence And as the latter sank into anarchy and rebellion, monarchical power rose to the height of despotism.

Nothing is more natural, than the transition from civil liberty to religious freedom. Individuals, as well as communities, who, favoured by a happy political constitution, have become acquainted with the rights of man, and accustomed to examine, if not also to create, the law which is to govern them; whose minds have been enlightened by activity, and feelings expanded by the enjoyments of life; whose natural courage has been exalted by internal security and prosperity; such men will not easily surrender themselves to the blind domination of a dull arbitrary creed, and will be the first to emancipate themselves from its yoke. Another circumstance, however, must have greatly tended to diffuse the new religion in these countries. Italy, it might be objected, the seat of the greatest intellectual culture, formerly the scene of the most violent political factions, where a burning climate kindles the blood with the wildest passions—Italy, among all the European countries, remained the freest from this change. But to a romantic people, whom a warm and lovely sky, a luxurious, ever young and ever smiling nature, and the multifarious witcheries of art, rendered keenly susceptible of sensuous enjoyment, that form of religion must naturally have been better adapted, which, by its splendid pomp captivates the senses, by its mysterious enigmas opens an unbounded range to the fancy; and which, through the most picturesque forms, labours to insinuate important doctrines into the soul. On the contrary, to a people whom the ordinary employments of civil life have drawn down to an unpoetical reality, who live more in plain notions than in images, and who cultivate their common sense at the expense of their imagination—to such a people, that creed will best recommend itself which dreads not investigation, which lays less stress on mysticism than on morals, and which is rather to be understood, than to be dwelt upon in meditation. In few words: the Roman Catholic religion will, on the whole, be found more adapted to a nation of artists, the Protestant more fitted to a nation of merchants.

On this supposition, the new doctrine which Luther diffused in Germany, and Calvin in Switzerland, must have found a congenial soil in the Netherlands. The first seeds of it were sown in the Netherlands, by the Protestant merchants, who assembled at Amsterdam and Antwerp. The German and Swiss troops, which Charles introduced into these countries, and the crowd of French, German, and English fugitives, who, under the protection of the liberties of Flanders, sought to escape the sword of persecution which threatened them at home, promoted their diffusion. A great portion of the Belgian nobility studied at that time at Geneva, as the University of Louvain was not yet in repute, and that of Douai not yet founded. The new tenets publicly taught there, were transplanted by the students to their various countries. In an isolated people, these first germs might easily have been crushed; but in the market-towns of Holland and Brabant, the resort of so many different nations, their first growth would escape the notice of Government, and be accelerated under the veil of obscurity. A difference in opinion might easily spring up and gain ground amongst those, who already were divided in national character, in manners, customs, and laws. Moreover, in a country where industry was the most lauded virtue, mendicity the most abhorred vice, a slothful body of men, like that of the monks, must have been an object of long and deep aversion. Hence, the new religion, which opposed these orders, derived an immense advantage from having the popular opinion on its side. Occasional pamphlets, full of bitterness and satire, to which the newly discovered art of printing secured a rapid circulation, and several bands of strolling orators, called Rederiker, who at that time made the circuit of the provinces, ridiculing in theatrical representations or songs the abuses of their times, contributed not a little to diminish respect for the Romish Church, and to prepare the people for the reception of the new dogmas.

The first conquests of this doctrine were astonishingly rapid. The number of those who in a short time avowed themselves its adherents, especially in the northern provinces, was prodigious; but among these, the foreigners far outnumbered the natives. Charles V, who, in this hostile array of religious tenets, had taken the side which a despot could not fail to take, opposed to the increasing torrent of innovation the most effectual remedies. Unhappily, for the reformed religion, political justice was on the side of its persecutor The dam which, for so many centuries, had repelled human understanding from truth, was too suddenly torn away, for the outbreaking torrent not to overflow its appointed channel The reviving spirit of liberty and of inquiry, which ought to have remained within the limits of religious questions, began also to examine into the rights of kings. While, in the commencement, iron fetters were justly broken off, a desire was eventually shown to rend asunder the most legitimate and most indispensable of ties. Even the Holy Scriptures, which were now circulated everywhere, while they imparted light and nurture to the sincere inquirer after truth, were the source also whence an eccentric fanaticism contrived to extort the virulent poison. The good cause had been compelled to choose the evil road of rebellion, and the result was what in such cases it ever will be, so long as men remain men. The bad cause, too, which had nothing in common with the good, but the employment of illegal means, emboldened by this slight point of connexion, appeared in the same company, and was mistaken for it. Luther had written against the invocation of saints; every audacious varlet who broke into the churches and cloisters, and plundered the altars, called himself Lutheran. Faction, rapine, fanaticism, licentiousness, robed themselves in his colours; the most enormous offenders, when brought before the judges, avowed themselves his followers. The Reformation had drawn down the Roman prelate to a level with fallible humanity; an insane band, stimulated by hunger and want, sought to annihilate all distinction of ranks. It was natural that a doctrine, which to the state showed itself only in its most unfavourable aspect, should not have been able to reconcile a monarch who had already so many reasons to extirpate it; and it is no wonder, therefore, that he employed against it the arms it had itself forced upon him.

Charles must already have looked upon himself as absolute in the Netherlands, since he did not think it necessary to extend to these countries the religious liberty which he had accorded to Germany. While compelled by the effectual resistance of the German princes, he assured to the former country a free exercise of the new religion, in the latter he published the most cruel edicts for its repression. By these, the reading of the Evangelists and Apostles; all open or secret meetings, to which religion gave its name in ever so slight a degree; all conversations on the subject at home or at the table; were forbidden, under severe penalties. In every province, special courts of judicature were established to watch over the execution of the edicts. Whoever held these erroneous opinions, was to forfeit his office, without regard to his rank. Whoever should be convicted of diffusing heretical doctrines, or even of simply attending the secret meetings of the Reformers, was to be condemned to death, and if a male, to be executed by the sword, if a female, buried alive. Backsliding heretics were to be committed to the flames. Not even the recantation of the offender could annul these appalling sentences. Whoever abjured his errors, gained nothing by his apostacy, but at farthest a milder kind of death.

The fiefs of the condemned were also confiscated, contrary to the privileges of the nation, which permitted the heir to redeem them for a trifling fine; and in defiance of an express and valuable privilege of the citizens of Holland, by which they were not to be tried out of their province, culprits were conveyed beyond the limits of the native judicature, and condemned by foreign tribunals. Thus did religion guide the hand of despotism, to attack with its sacred weapon, and without danger or opposition, the liberties which were inviolable to the secular arm.

Charles V., emboldened by the fortunate progress of his arms in Germany, thought that he might now venture on every thing, and seriously meditated the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition in the Netherlands. But the terror of its very name, alone reduced commerce in Antwerp to a standstill. The principal foreign merchants prepared to quit the city. All buying and selling ceased. The value of houses fell, the employment of artisans stopped. Money disappeared from the hands of the citizen The ruin of that flourishing commercial city was inevitable, had not Charles V. listened to the representations of the Duchess of Parma, and abandoned this perilous resolve. The tribunal, therefore, was ordered not to interfere with the foreign merchants, and the title of Inquisitor was changed unto the milder appellation of Spiritual Judge. But in the other provinces, that tribunal proceeded to rage with the inhuman despotism which has ever been peculiar to it. It has been computed that during the reign of Charles V., 50,000 persons perished by the hand of the executioner for religion alone.

When we glance at the violent proceedings of this monarch, we are quite at a loss to comprehend what it was that kept the rebellion within bounds during his reign, which broke out with so much violence under his successor. A closer investigation will clear up this seeming anomaly. Charles's dreaded supremacy in Europe, had raised the commerce of the Netherlands to a height which it had never before attained. The majesty of his name opened all harbours, cleared all seas for their vessels, and obtained for them the most favourable commercial treaties with foreign powers. Through him, in particular, they destroyed the dominion of the Hanse towns in the Baltic. Through him, also, the New World, Spain, Italy, Germany, which now shared with them a common ruler, were, in a measure, to be considered as provinces of their own country, and opened new channels for their commerce. He had, moreover, united the remaining six provinces with the hereditary states of Burgundy, and thus given to them an extent and political importance, which placed them by the side of the first kingdoms of Europe *.

By all this, he flattered the national pride of this people Moreover, by the incorporation of Gueldres, Utrecht, Friesland, and Groningen with these provinces, he put an end to the private wars which had so long disturbed their commerce; an unbroken internal peace now allowed them to enjoy the full fruits of their industry. Charles was therefore a bene-

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* He had, too, at one time the intention of raising it to a kingdom; but the essential points of difference between the provinces, which extended from constitution and manners to measures and weights, soon made him abandon this design. More important was the service which he designed them in the Burgundian treaty, which settled its relation to the German empire. According to this treaty, the seventeen provinces were to contribute to the common wants of the German empire twice as much as an electoral prince; in case of a Turkish war three times as much; in return for which, however, they were to enjoy the powerful protection of this empire, and not to be injured in any of their various privileges. The revolution which under Charles's son altered the political constitution of the provinces, again annulled this compact, which, on account of the trifling advantage that it conferred, deserves no further notice.

factor of this people. At the same time, the splendour of his victories dazzled their eyes; the glory of their sovereign, which was reflected upon them also, had bribed their republican vigilance; while the awe-inspiring halo of invincibility, which encircled the conqueror of Germany, France, Italy, and Africa, terrified the factious. And then, who knows not on how much may venture the man, be he a private individual or a prince, who has succeeded in enchaining the admiration of his fellow creatures. His repeated personal visits to these lands, which he, according to his own confession, visited as often as ten different times, kept the disaffected within bounds; the constant exercise of severe and prompt justice maintained the awe of the royal power. Finally, Charles was born in the Netherlands, and loved the nation in whose lap he had grown up. Their manners pleased him, the simplicity of their character and social intercourse formed for him a pleasing recreation from the severe Spanish gravity. He spoke their language, and followed their customs in his private life. The burdensome ceremonies, which form the unnatural barriers between king and people, were banished from Brussels. No jealous foreigner debarred natives from access to their prince, their way to him was through their own countrymen, to whom he entrusted his person. He spoke much, and courteously with them; his deportment was engaging, his discourse obliging. These simple artifices won for him their love, and while his armies trod down their corn-fields, while his rapacious imposts diminished their property, while his governors oppressed, his executioners slaughtered, he secured their hearts by a friendly demeanour.

Gladly would Charles have seen this affection of the nation for himself descend upon his son. On this account, he sent for him in his youth from Spain, and showed him in Brussels to his future subjects. On the solemn day of his abdication, he recommended to him these lands as the richest jewel in his crown, and earnestly exhorted him to respect their laws and privileges.

Philip II. was in all the direct opposite of his father. As ambitious as Charles, but with less knowledge of men and of the rights of man, he had formed to himself a notion of royal authority, which regarded men as simply the servile instruments of despotic will, and was outraged by every symptom of liberty. Born in Spain, and educated under the iron discipline of the monks, he demanded of others the same gloomy formality and reserve as marked his own character. The cheerful merriment of his Flemish subjects was as uncongenial to his disposition and temper, as their privileges were offensive to his imperious will. He spoke no other language but the Spanish, endured none but Spaniards about his person, and obstinately adhered to all their customs. In vain did the loyal ingenuity of the Flemish towns through which he passed, vie with each other in solemnizing his arrival with costly festivities *. Philip's eye remained dark; all the profusion of magnificence, all the loud and hearty effusions of the sincerest joy, could not win from him one approving smile.

Charles entirely missed his aim by presenting his son to the Flemings. They might, eventually, have endured his yoke with less impatience if he had never set his foot in their land. But his look forewarned them what they had to expect; his entry into Brussels lost him all hearts. The Emperor's gracious affability with his people, only served to throw a darker shade on the haughty gravity of his son. They read in his countenance the destructive purpose against their liberties, which, even then, he already revolved in his breast. Forewarned to find in him a tyrant, they were forearmed to resist him.

The throne of the Netherlands was the first which Charles V. abdicated. Before a solemn convention in Brussels, he absolved the States-General of their oath, and transferred their allegiance to King Philip, his son. "If my death," addressing the latter as he concluded, "had placed you in possession of these countries, even in that case, so valuable a bequest would have given me great claims on your gratitude. But now that of my free will I transfer them to you, now that I die in order to hasten your enjoyment of them, I only require of you to pay to the people the increased obligation which the voluntary surrender of my dignity lays upon you. Other princes esteem it a peculiar felicity to bequeath to their children the crown which death is already ravishing from them. This happiness I am anxious to enjoy during my life, I wish

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* The town of Antwerp, alone, expended on an occasion of this kind 260,000 gold florins.

to be a spectator of your reign. Few will follow my example, as few have preceded me in it. But this my deed will be praised, if your future life should justify my expectations, if you continue to be guided by that wisdom which you have hitherto evinced, if you remain inviolably attached to the pure faith which is the main pillar of your throne. One thing more I have to add:—may Heaven grant you also a son, to whom you may transmit your power. by choice, and not by necessity."

After the Emperor had concluded his address, Philip kneeled down before him, kissed his hand, and received his paternal blessing. His eyes, for the last time, were moistened with a tear. All present wept. It was an hour never to be forgotten.

This affecting farce was soon followed by another. Philip received the homage of the assembled states. He took the oath administered in the following words: "I, Philip, by the grace of God, Prince of Spain, of the two Sicilies, &c., do vow and swear that I will be a good and just lord in these countries, counties, and duchies, &c.; that I will well and truly hold, and cause to be held, the privileges and liberties of all the nobles, towns, commons, and subjects which have been conferred upon them by my predecessors, and also the customs, usages, and rights which they now have and enjoy, jointly and severally, and moreover, that I will do all that by law and right pertains to a good and just prince and lord, so help me God and all His Saints."

The alarm which the arbitrary government of the Emperor had inspired, and the distrust of his son, are already visible in the formula of this oath, which was drawn up in far more guarded and explicit terms than that which had been administered to Charles V. himself, and all the Dukes of Burgundy. Philip, for instance, was compelled to swear to the maintenance of their customs and usages, what before his time had never been required. In the oath which the states took to him, no other obedience was promised, than such as should be consistent with the privileges of the country. His officers then were only to reckon on submission and support, so long as they legally discharged the duties entrusted to them. Lastly, in this oath of allegiance, Philip is simply styled the natural, the hereditary prince, and not, as the Emperor had desired, sovereign or lord; proof enough, how little confidence was placed in the justice and liberality of the new Sovereign.

PHILIP THE SECOND, RULER OF THE NETHERLANDS

Philip II. received the lordship of the Netherlands in the brightest period of their prosperity. He was the first of their princes who united them all under his authority. They now consisted of seventeen provinces; the duchies of Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg and Gueldres, the seven counties of Artois, Hainault, Flanders, Namur, Zütphen, Holland, and Zealand, the margravate of Antwerp, and the five lordships of Friesland, Mechlin (Malines), Utrecht, Overyssel, and Gröningen, which, collectively, formed a great and powerful state able to contend with monarchies. Higher than it then stood, their commerce could not rise. The sources of their wealth were above the earth's surface, but they were more valuable and inexhaustible, and richer than all the mines in America. These seventeen provinces, which, taken together, scarcely comprised the fifth part of Italy, and do not extend beyond three hundred Flemish miles, yielded an annual revenue to their lord, not much inferior to that which Britain formerly paid to its kings, before the latter had annexed so many of the ecclesiastical domains to their crown. Three hundred and fifty cities, alive with industry and pleasure, many of them fortified by their natural position, and secure without bulwarks or walls; 6,300 market towns of a larger size; smaller villages, farms, and castles innumerable, imparted to this territory the aspect of one unbroken flourishing landscape. The nation had now reached the meridian of its splendour; industry and abundance had exalted the genius of the citizen, enlightened his ideas, ennobled his affections; every flower of the intellect had opened with the flourishing condition of the country. A happy temperament under a severe climate cooled the ardour of their blood, and modulated the rage of their passions; equanimity, moderation, and enduring patience, the gifts of a northern clime; integrity, justice, and faith, the necessary virtues of their profession; and the delightful fruits of liberty, truth, benevolence, and a patriotic pride were blended in their character, with a slight admixture of human frailties. No people on earth was more easily governed by a more prudent prince, and none with more difficulty by a charlatan or a tyrant. Nowhere, was the popular voice so infallible a test of good government, as here. True statesmanship could be tried in no nobler school, and a sickly artificial policy had none worse to fear.

A state constituted like this, could act and endure with gigantic energy, whenever pressing emergencies called forth its powers, and a skilful and provident administration elicited its resources. Charles V. bequeathed to his successor an authority in these provinces, little inferior to that of a limited monarchy. The prerogative of the crown had gained a visible ascendancy over the republican spirit, and that complicated machine could now be set in motion, almost as certainly and rapidly as the most absolutely governed nation. The numerous nobility, formerly so powerful, cheerfully accompanied their sovereign in his wars, or on the civil changes of the state courted the approving smile of royalty. The crafty policy of the crown had created a new and imaginary good, of which it was the exclusive dispenser. New passions and new ideas of happiness supplanted, at last, the rude simplicity of republican virtue. Pride gave place to vanity, true liberty to titles of honour, a needy independence to a luxurious servitude. To oppress or to plunder their native land, as the absolute satraps of an absolute lord, was a more powerful allurement for the avarice and ambition of the great, than in the general assembly of the state to share with the monarch a hundredth part of the supreme power. A large portion, moreover, of the nobility, were deeply sunk in poverty and debt. Charles V. had crippled all the most dangerous vassals of the crown, by expensive embassies to foreign courts, under the specious pretext of honorary distinctions. Thus, William of Orange was despatched to Germany with the Imperial crown, and Count Egmont to conclude the marriage contract between Philip and Queen Mary. Both also afterwards accompanied the Duke of Alva to France, to negociate the peace between the two crowns, and the new alliance of their sovereign with Madame Elizabeth. The expenses of these journeys amounted to 300,000 florins, towards which the king did not contribute a single penny. When the Prince of Orange was appointed generalissimo, in the place of the Duke of Savoy, he was obliged to defray all the necessary expenses of his office. When foreign ambassadors or princes came to Brussels, it was made incumbent on the nobles to maintain the honour of their king, who himself always dined alone, and never kept open table. Spanish policy had devised a still more ingenious contrivance, gradually to impoverish the richest families of the land. Every year, one of the Castilian nobles made his appearance in Brussels, where he displayed a lavish magnificence. In Brussels, it was accounted an indelible disgrace to be distanced by a stranger in such munificence. All vied to surpass him, and exhausted their fortunes in this costly emulation, while the Spaniard made a timely retreat to his native country, and by the frugality of four years, repaired the extravagance of one year. It was the foible of the Netherlandish nobility to contest with every stranger the credit of superior wealth, and of this weakness the government studiously availed itself. Certainly, these arts did not, in the sequel, produce the exact result that had been calculated on; for these pecuniary burdens only made the nobility the more disposed for innovation, since he who has lost all, can only be a gainer in the general ruin.

The Roman Church had ever been a main support of the royal power, and it was only natural that it should be so. Its golden time was the bondage of the human intellect, and like royalty, it had gained by the ignorance and weakness of men. Civil oppression made religion more necessary and more dear; submission to tyrannical power prepares the mind for a blind, convenient faith, and the hierarchy repaid with usury the services of despotism. In the provinces, the bishops and prelates were zealous supporters of royalty, and ever ready to sacrifice the welfare of the citizen to the temporal advancement of the church, and the political interests of the sovereign.

Numerous and brave garrisons also held the cities in awe, which were at the same time divided by religious squabbles and factions, and consequently deprived of their strongest support—union among themselves. How little, therefore, did it require to ensure this preponderance of Philip's power, and how fatal must have been the folly by which it was lost.

But Philip's authority in these provinces, however great, did not surpass the influence which the Spanish monarchy at that time enjoyed throughout Europe. No state ventured to enter the arena of contest with it. France, its most dangerous neighbour, weakened by a destructive war, and still more by internal factions, which boldly raised their heads during the feeble government of a child, was advancing rapidly to that unhappy condition, which, for nearly half a century, made it a theatre of the most enormous crimes and the most fearful calamities. In England, Elizabeth could with difficulty protect her still tottering throne against the furious storms of faction, and her new church establishment against the insidious arts of the Romanists. That country still awaited her mighty call, before it could emerge from a humble obscurity, and had not yet been awakened, by the faulty policy of her rival, to that vigour and energy, with which it finally overthrew him. The Imperial family of Germany was united with that of Spain, by the double ties of blood and political interest; and the victorious progress of Soliman, drew its attention more to the east than to the west of Europe. Gratitude and fear secured to Philip the Italian princes, and his creatures ruled the Conclave. The monarchies of the North still lay in barbarous darkness and obscurity, or only just began to acquire form and strength, and were as yet unrecognised in the political system of Europe. The most skilful generals, numerous armies accustomed to victory, a formidable marine, and the golden tribute from the West Indies, which now first began to come in regularly and certainly—what terrible instruments were these, in the firm and steady hand of a talented prince! Under such auspicious stars did King Philip commence his reign.

Before we see him act, we must first look hastily into the deep recesses of his soul, and we shall there find a key to his political life. Joy and benevolence were wholly wanting in the composition of his character. His temperament, and the gloomy years of his early childhood, denied him the former the latter could not be imparted to him by men, who had renounced the sweetest and most powerful of the social ties. Two ideas, his own self, and what was above that self, engrossed his narrow and contracted mind. Egotism and religion were the contents and the titlepage of the history of his whole life. He was a King and a Christian, and was bad in both characters; he never was a man among men, because he never condescended, but only ascended. His belief was dark and cruel; for his divinity was a Being of terror, from whom he had nothing to hope but everything to fear. To the ordinary man, the divinity appears as a comforter, as a saviour; before his mind it was set up as an image of fear, a painful, humiliating check to his human omnipotence. His veneration for this Being was so much the more profound and deeply rooted, the less it extended to other objects. He trembled servilely before God, because God was the only being before whom he had to tremble. Charles V. was zealous for religion, because religion promoted his objects. Philip was so because he had real faith in it. The former let loose the fire and the sword upon thousands for the sake of a dogma, while he himself, in the person of the Pope, his captive, derided the very doctrine for which he had sacrificed so much human blood. It was only with repugnance and scruples of conscience that Philip resolved on the most just war against the Pope; and resigned all the fruits of his victory, as a penitent malefactor surrenders his booty. The Emperor was cruel from calculation, his son from impulse. The first possessed a strong and enlightened spirit, and was, perhaps, so much the worse as a man; the second, was narrow-minded and weak, but the more upright.

Both, however, as it appears to me, might have been better men than they actually were, and still, on the whole, have acted on the very same principles. What we lay to the charge of personal character of an individual, is very often the infirmity, the necessary imperfection of universal human nature. A monarchy so great and so powerful, was too great a trial for human pride, and too mighty a charge for human power. To combine universal happiness with the highest liberty of the individual, is the sole prerogative of infinite intelligence, which diffuses itself omnipresently over all. But what resource has man, when placed in the position of omnipotence? Man can only aid his circumscribed powers by classification; like the naturalist, he establishes certain marks and rules, by which to facilitate his own feeble survey of the whole, to which all individualities must conform. All this s accomplished for him by religion. She finds hope and fear planted in every human breast; by making herself mistress of these emotions, and directing their affections to a single object, she virtually transforms millions of independent beings into one uniform abstract. The endless diversity of the human will, no longer embarrasses its ruler—now there exists one universal good, one universal evil, which he can bring forward or withdraw at pleasure, and which works in unison with himself even when absent. Now a boundary is established, before which liberty must halt; a venerable, hallowed line, towards which all the various conflicting inclinations of the will must finally converge. The common aim of despotism and of priestcraft is uniformity, and uniformity is a necessary expedient of human poverty and imperfection. Philip became a greater despot than his father, because his mind was more contracted, or, in other words, he was forced to adhere the more scrupulously to general rules, the less capable he was of descending to special and individual exceptions. What conclusion could we draw from these principles, but that Philip II. could not possibly have any higher object of his solicitude, than uniformity both in religion and in laws, because without these he could not reign?

And, yet, he would have shown more mildness and forbearance in his government, if he had entered upon it earlier. In the judgment which is usually formed of this prince, one circumstance does not appear to be sufficiently considered in the history of his mind and heart, which, however, in all fairness ought to be duly weighed. Philip counted nearly thirty years, when he ascended the Spanish throne, and the early maturity of his understanding had anticipated the period of his majority A mind like his, conscious of its powers, and only too early acquainted with his high expectations, could not brook the yoke of childish subjection in which he stood; the superior genius of the father, and the absolute authority of the autocrat, must have weighed heavily on the self-satisfied pride of such a son. The share which the former allowed him in the government of the empire, was just important enough to disengage his mind from petty passions, and to confirm the austere gravity of his character; but also meagre enough, to kindle a fiercer longing for un limited power. When he actually became possessed of uncontrolled authority, it had lost the charm of novelty. The sweet intoxication of a young monarch, in the sudden and early possession of supreme power; that joyous tumult of emotions, which opens the soul to every softer sentiment, and to which humanity has owed so many of the most valuable and the most prized of its institutions; this pleasing moment had for him long passed by, or had never existed. His character was already hardened, when fortune put him to this severe test, and his settled principles withstood the collision of occasional emotion. He had had time, during fifteen years, to prepare himself for the change; and instead of youthfully dallying with the external symbols of his new station, or of losing the morning of his government in the intoxication of an idle vanity, he remained composed and serious enough, to enter at once on the full possession of his power, so as to revenge himself through the most extensive employment of it, for its having been so long withheld from him.

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE INQUISITION.

Philip II. no sooner saw himself, through the peace of Chauteau-Cambray, in undisturbed enjoyment of his immense territory, than he turned his whole attention to the great work of purifying religion, and verified the fears of his Netherlandish subjects. The ordinances, which his father had caused to be promulgated against heretics, were renewed in all their rigour; and terrible tribunals, to whom nothing but the name of inquisition was wanting, were appointed to watch over their execution. But his plan appeared to him scarcely more than half fulfilled, so long as he could not transplant into these countries the Spanish Inquisition in its perfect form—a design in which the Emperor had already suffered shipwreck.

This Spanish Inquisition is an institution of a new and peculiar kind, which finds no prototype in the whole course of time, and admits of comparison with no ecclesiastical or civil tribunal. Inquisition had existed from the time when reason meddled with what is holy, and from the very commencement of scepticism and innovation; but it was in the middle of the thirteenth century, after some examples of apostacy had alarmed the hierarchy, that Innocent III. first erected for it a peculiar tribunal, and separated, in an unnatural manner, ecclesiastical superintendence and instruction from its judicial and retributive office. In order to be the more sure that no human sensibilities, or natural tenderness, should thwart the stern severity of its statutes, he took it out of the hands of the bishops and secular clergy, who, by the ties of civil life, were still too much attached to humanity for his purpose, and consigned it to those of the monks, a half-denaturalized race of beings, who had abjured the sacred feelings of nature, and were the servile tools of the Roman See. The Inquisition was received in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France; a Franciscan monk sat as judge in the terrible court, which passed sentence on the Templars. A few states succeeded either in totally excluding, or else in subjecting it to civil authority. The Netherlands had remained free from it, until the government of Charles V.; their bishops exercised the spiritual censorship, and in extraordinary cases, reference was made to foreign courts of inquisition; by the French provinces to that of Paris, by the German to that of Cologne.

But the Inquisition which we are here speaking of, came from the west of Europe, and was of a different origin and form. The last Moorish throne in Granada had fallen in the fifteenth century, and the false faith of the Saracen had finally succumbed before the fortunes of Christianity. But the gospel was still new, and but imperfectly established in this youngest of Christian kingdoms, and in the confused mixture of heterogeneous laws and manners, the religions had become mixed. It is true, the sword of persecution had driven many thousand families to Africa, but a far larger portion, detained by the love of climate and home, purchased remission from this dreadful necessity by a show of conversion, and continued at Christian altars to serve Muhammed and Moses. So long as prayers were offered towards Mecca, Granada was not subdued; so long as the new Christian, in the retirement of his house, became again a Jew or a Moslem, he was as little secured to the throne as to the Romish See. It was no longer deemed sufficient to compel a perverse people to adopt the exterior forms of a new faith, or to wed it to the victorious church by the weak bands of ceremonials; the object now was to extirpate the roots of an old religion, and to subdue an obstinate bias, which, by the slow operation of centuries, had been implanted in their manners, their language, and their laws, and by the enduring influence of a paternal soil and sky was still maintained in its full extent and vigour.

If the church wished to triumph completely over the opposing worship, and to secure her new conquest beyond all chance of relapse, it was indispensable that she should undermine the foundation itself on which the old religion was built. It was necessary to break to pieces the entire form of moral character, to which it was so closely and intimately attached. It was requisite to loosen its secret roots from the hold they had taken in the innermost depths of the soul; to extinguish all traces of it, both in domestic life, and in the civil world; to cause all recollection of it to perish; and if possible, to destroy the very susceptibility for its impressions. Country and family, conscience and honour, the sacred feelings of society and of nature, are ever the first and immediate ties to which religion attaches itself, from these it derives while it imparts strength. This connexion was now to be dissolved, the old religion was violently to be dissevered from the holy feelings of nature; even at the expense of the sanctity itself of these emotions. Thus arose that Inquisition which, to distinguish it from the more humane tribunals of the same name, we usually call the Spanish. Its founder was Cardinal Ximenes, a Dominican monk. Torquemada was the first who ascended its bloody throne, who established its statutes, and for ever cursed his order with this bequest. Sworn to the degradation of the understanding, and the murder of intellect; the instruments it employed were terror and infamy. Every evil passion was in its pay; its snare was set in every joy of life. Solitude itself was not safe from it; the fear of its omnipresence fettered the freedom of the soul in its inmost and deepest recesses. It prostrated all the instincts of human nature, before it yielded all the ties which otherwise man held most sacred. A heretic forfeited all claims upon his race; the most trivial infidelity to his mother church divested him of the rights of his nature. A modest doubt in the infallibility of the pope, met with the punishment of parricide and the infamy of sodomy; its sentences resembled the frightful corruption of the plague, which turns the most healthy body into rapid putrefaction. Even the inanimate things belonging to a heretic were accursed. No destiny could snatch the victim of the Inquisition from its sentence: its decrees were carried in force on corpses and on pictures; and the grave itself was no asylum from its tremendous arm. The presumptuous arrogance of its decrees, could only be surpassed by the inhumanity which executed them. By coupling the ludicrous with the terrible, and by amusing the eye with the strangeness of its processions, it weakened compassion by the gratification of another feeling; it drowned sympathy in derision and contempt. The delinquent was conducted with solemn pomp to the place of execution, a blood-red flag was displayed before him, the universal clang of all the bells accompanied the procession. First came the priests in the robes of the Mass, and singing a sacred hymn: next followed the condemned sinner, clothed in a yellow vest, covered with figures of black devils. On his head, he wore a paper cap surmounted by a human figure, around which played lambent flames of fire, and ghastly demons flitted. The image of the crucified Saviour was carried before, but turned away from the eternally condemned sinner, for whom salvation was no longer available. His mortal body belonged to the material fire, his immortal soul to the flames of hell A gag closed his mouth, and prevented him from alleviating his pain by lamentations, from awakening compassion by his affecting tale, and from divulging the secrets of the holy tribunal. He was followed by the clergy in festive robes, by the magistrates, and the nobility; the fathers, who had been his judges, closed the awful procession. It seemed like a solemn funeral procession, but on looking for the corpse on its way to the grave, behold it was a living body, whose groans are now to afford such shuddering entertainment to the people. The executions were generally held on the high festivals, for which a number of such unfortunate sufferers were reserved in the prisons of the holy house, in order to enhance the rejoicing by the multitude of the victims; and on these occasions, the king himself was usually present. He sat with uncovered head, on a lower chair than that of the Grand Inquisitor, to whom on such occasions he yielded precedence: who, then, would not tremble before a tribunal, at which majesty must humble itself?

The great revolution in the church accomplished by Luther and Calvin, renewed the causes to which this tribunal owed its first origin: and that which, at its commencement, was invented to clear the petty kingdom of Granada from the feeble remnant of Saracens and Jews, was now required for the whole of Christendom. All the Inquisitions in Portugal, Italy, Germany, and France, adopted the form of the Spanish; it followed Europeans to the Indies, and established in Goa a fearful tribunal, whose inhuman proceedings make us shudder even at the bare recital. Wherever it planted its foot, devastation followed; but in no part of the world did it rage so violently as in Spain. The victims are forgotten, whom it immolated; the human race renews itself, and the lands, too, flourish again, which it has devastated and depopulated by its fury; but centuries will elapse, before its traces disappear from the Spanish character. A generous and enlightened nation has been stopped by it on its road to perfection; it has banished genius from a region where it was indigenous, and a stillness like that which hangs over the grave, has been left in the mind of a people who, beyond most others of our world, were framed for happiness and enjoyment.

The first Inquisitor in Brabant was appointed by Charles V. in the year 1522. Some priests were associated with him as coadjutors; but he himself was a layman. After the death of Adrian VI., his successor, Clement VII., appointed three Inquisitors for all the Netherlands; and Paul III. again reduced them to two, which number continued until the commencement of the troubles. In the year 1530, with the aid and approbation of the states, the edicts against heretics were promulgated, which formed the foundation of all that followed, and in which, also, express mention is made of the Inquisition. In the year 1550, in consequence of the rapid increase of sects, Charles V. was under the necessity of reviving and enforcing these edicts, and it was on this occasion that the town of Antwerp opposed the establishment of the Inquisition, and obtained an exemption from its jurisdiction. But the spirit of the Inquisition in the Netherlands, in accordance with the genius of the country, was more humane than in Spain, and, as yet, had never been administered by a foreigner, much less by a Dominican. The edicts which were known to every body, served it as the rule of its decisions. On this very account, it was less obnoxious; because, however severe its sentence, it did not appear a tool of arbitrary power, and it did not, like the Spanish Inquisition, veil itself in secrecy

Philip, however, was desirous of introducing the latter tribunal into the Netherlands, since it appeared to him the instrument best adapted to destroy the spirit of this people, and to prepare them for a despotic government. He began, therefore, by increasing the rigour of the religious ordinances of his father; by gradually extending the power of the inquisitors; by making the proceedings more arbitrary, and more independent of the civil jurisdiction. The tribunal soon wanted little more than the name, and the Dominicans, to resemble, in every point, the Spanish Inquisition. Bare suspicion was enough to snatch a citizen from the bosom of public tranquillity, and from his domestic circle; and the weakest evidence was a sufficient justification for the use of the rack. Whoever fell into its abyss, returned no more to the world. All the benefits of the laws ceased for him; the maternal care of justice no longer noticed him; beyond the pale of his former world, malice and stupidity judged him according to laws which were never intended for man. The delinquent never knew his accuser, and very seldom his crime, a flagitious, devilish artifice, which constrained the unhappy victim to guess at his error, and in the delirium of the rack, or in the weariness of a long living interment, to acknowledge transgressions which, perhaps, had never been committed, or, at least, had never come to the knowledge of his judges. The goods of the condemned were confiscated, and the informer encouraged by letters of grace and rewards No privilege, no civil jurisdiction, was valid against the holy power; the secular arm lost for ever all whom that power had once touched. Its only share in the judicial duties of the latter, was to execute its sentences with humble submissiveness. The consequences of such an institution were, of necessity, unnatural and horrible; the whole temporal happiness, the life itself, of an innocent man, was at the mercy of any worthless fellow. Every secret enemy, every envious person, had now the perilous temptation of an unseen and unfailing revenge. The security of property, the sincerity of intercourse, were gone; all the ties of interest were dissolved; all of blood and of affection were irreparably broken An infectious distrust envenomed social life; the dreaded presence of a spy terrified the eye from seeing, and choked the voice in the midst of utterance. No one believed in the existence of an honest man, or passed for one himself. Good name, the ties of country, brotherhood, even oaths, and all that man holds sacred, were fallen in estimation. Such was the destiny to which a great and flourishing commercial town was subjected, where 100,000 industrious men had been brought together by the single tie of mutual confidence :—every one indispensable to his neighbour, and yet every one distrusted and distrustful :—all attracted by the spirit of gain, and repelled from each other by fear :—all the props of society torn away, where social union was the basis of all life and all existence.

OTHER ENCROACHMENTS ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NETHERLANDS.

No wonder if so unnatural a tribunal, which had proved intolerable, even to the more submissive spirit of the Spaniard, drove a free state to rebellion. But the terror which it inspired was increased by the Spanish troops, which, even after the restoration of peace, were kept in the country, and, in violation of the constitution, garrisoned border towns. Charles V. had been forgiven for this introduction of foreign armies, so long as the necessity of it was evident, and his good intentions were less distrusted. But now men saw in these troops only the alarming preparations of oppression, and the instruments of a detested hierarchy. Moreover, a considerable body of cavalry, composed of natives, and fully adequate for the protection of the country, made these foreigners superfluous. The licentiousness and rapacity, too, of the Spaniards, whose pay was long in arrear, and who indemnified themselves at the expense of the citizens, completed the exasperation of the people, and drove the lower orders to despair. Subsequently, when the general murmur induced the government to move them from the frontiers, and transport them into the islands of Zealand, where ships were prepared for their deportation, their excesses were carried to such a pitch, that the inhabitants left off working at the embankments, and preferred to abandon their native country to the fury of the sea, rather than to submit any longer to the wanton brutality of these lawless bands.

Philip, indeed, would have wished to retain these Spaniards in the country, in order, by their presence, to give weight to his edicts, and to support the innovations which he had resolved to make in the constitution of the Netherlands. He regarded them as a guarantee for the submission of the nation, and as a chain by which he held it captive. Accordingly, he left no expedient untried, to evade the persevering importunity of the states, who demanded the withdrawal of these troops; and for this end, he exhausted all the resources of chicanery and persuasion. At one time, he pretended to dread a sudden invasion by France, although, torn by furious factions, that country could scarce support itself against a domestic enemy; at another time they were, he said, to receive his son, Don Carlos, on the frontiers; whom, however, he never intended should leave Castile. Their maintenance should not be a burden to the nation; he himself would disburse all their expenses from his private purse. In order to detain them with the more appearance of reason, he purposely kept back from them their arrears of pay; for otherwise, he would assuredly have preferred them to the troops of the country, whose demands he fully satisfied. To lull the fears of the nation, and to appease the general discontent, he offered the chief command of these troops to the two favourites of the people, the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont. Both, however, declined his offer, with the noble-minded declaration, that they could never make up their minds to serve contrary to the laws of the country. The more desire the king showed to have his Spaniards in the country, the more obstinately the states insisted on their removal. In the following Diet at Ghent, he was compelled, in the very midst of his courtiers, to listen to republican truth. "Why are foreign hands needed for our defence?" demanded the Syndic of Ghent. "Is it that the rest of the world should consider us too stupid, or too cowardly, to protect ourselves? Why have we made peace, if the burdens of war are still to oppress us? In war, necessity enforced endurance; in peace, our patience is exhausted by its burdens. Or shall we be able to keep in order these licentious bands, which thine own presence could not restrain? Here, Cambray and

Antwerp cry for redress; there, Thionville and Marienburg lie waste; and, surely, thou hast not bestowed upon us peace, that our cities should become deserts, as they necessarily must if thou freest them not from these destroyers? Perhaps thou art anxious to guard against surprise from our neighbours? This precaution is wise; but the report of their preparations will long outrun their hostilities. Why incur a heavy expense to engage foreigners, who will not care for a country which they must leave to-morrow? Hast thou not still at thy command the same brave Netherlanders, to whom thy father entrusted the republic in far more troubled times? Why shouldest thou now doubt their loyalty, which, to thy ancestors, they have preserved for so many centuries inviolate? Will not they be sufficient to sustain the war long enough, to give time to thy confederates to join their banners, or to thyself to send succour from the neighbouring country?" This language was too new to the king, and its truth too obvious, for him to be able at once to reply to it. "I, also, am a foreigner," he at length exclaimed, "and they would like, I suppose, to expel me from the country!" At the same time he descended from the throne, and left the assembly; but the speaker was pardoned for his boldness. Two days afterwards, he sent a message to the states, that if he had been apprised earlier that these troops were a burden to them, he would have immediately made preparation to remove them, with himself, to Spain. Now it was too late, for they would not depart unpaid; but he pledged them his most sacred promise, that they should not be oppressed with this burden more than four months. Nevertheless, the troops remained in this country eighteen months instead of four; and would not, perhaps, even then have left it so soon, if the exigencies of the state had not made their presence indispensable in another part of the world.

The illegal appointment of foreigners to the most important offices of the country, afforded further occasion of complaint against the government. Of all the privileges of the provinces, none was so obnoxious to the Spaniards as that which excluded strangers from office, and none they had so zealously sought to abrogate. Italy, the two Indies, and all the provinces of this vast Empire, were indeed open to their rapacity and ambition; but from the richest of them all, an inexorable fundamental law excluded them. They artfully persuaded their sovereign, that his power in these countries would never be firmly established, so long as he could not employ foreigners as his instruments. The Bishop of Arras, a Burgundian by birth, had already been illegally forced upon the Flemings; and now the Count of Feria, a Castilian, was to receive a seat and voice in the council of state. But this attempt met with a bolder resistance than the king's flatterers had led him to expect, and his despotic omnipotence was this time wrecked by the politic measures of William of Orange, and the firmness of the states.

WILLIAM OF ORANGE AND COUNT EGMONT.

By such measures, did Philip usher in his government of the Netherlands, and such were the grievances of the nation when he was preparing to leave them. He had long been impatient to quit a country where he was a stranger, where there was so much that opposed his secret wishes, and where his despotic mind found such undaunted monitors to remind him of the laws of freedom. The peace with France, at last, rendered a longer stay unnecessary; the armaments of Soliman required his presence in the south, and the Spaniards also began to miss their long-absent king. The choice of a supreme Stadtholder for the Netherlands, was the principal matter which still detained him. Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, had filled this place since the resignation of Mary, Queen of Hungary, which, however, so long as the king himself was present, conferred more honour than real influence. His absence would make it the most important office in the monarchy, and the most splendid aim for the ambition of a subject. It had now become vacant through the departure of the duke, whom the peace of Chateau Cambray had restored to his dominions. The almost unlimited power with which the supreme Statholder would be entrusted, the capacity and experience which so extensive and delicate an appointment required, but, especially, the daring designs which the Government had in contemplation against the freedom of the country, the execution of which would devolve on him, necessarily embarrassed the choice. The law, which excluded all foreigners from office, made an exception in the case of the supreme Stadtholder. As he could not be, at the same time, a native of all the provinces, it was allowable for him not to belong to any one of them; for the jealousy of the man of Brabant would concede no greater right to a Fleming, whose home was half a mile from his frontier, than to a Sicilian, who lived in another soil and under a different sky. But here the interests of the crown itself seemed to favour the appointment of a native. A Brabanter, for instance, who enjoyed the full confidence of his countrymen, if he were a traitor, would have half accomplished his treason, before a foreign governor could have overcome the mistrust, with which his most insignificant measures would be watched. If the government should succeed in carrying through its designs in one province, the opposition of the rest would then be a temerity, which it would be justified in punishing in the severest manner In the common whole, which the provinces now formed, their individual constitutions were, in a measure, destroyed; the obedience of one would be a law for all, and the privilege, which one knew not how to preserve, was lost for the rest.

Among the Flemish nobles, who could lay claim to the Chief Stadtholdership, the expectations and wishes of the nation were divided between Count Egmont and the Prince of Orange, who were alike qualified for this high dignity by illustrious birth and personal merits, and by an equal share in the affections of the people. Their high rank placed them both near to the throne, and if the choice of the monarch was to rest on the worthiest, it must necessarily fall upon one of these two. As, in the course of our history, we shall often have occasion to mention both names, the reader cannot be too early made acquainted with their characters.

William I., Prince of Orange, was descended from the princely German house of Nassau, which had already flourished eight centuries, had long disputed the pre-eminence with Austria, and had given one Emperor to Germany. Besides several extensive domains in the Netherlands, which made him a citizen of this Republic, and a vassal of the Spanish monarchy, he possessed also in France the independout princedom of Orange. William was born in the year 1533, at Dillenburg, in the country of Nassau, of a Countess Stolberg. His father, the Count of Nassau, of the same name, had embraced the Protestant religion, and caused his son also to be educated in it; but Charles V., who early formed an attachment for the boy, took him, when quite young, to his court, and had him brought up in the Romish Church. This monarch, who already in the child discovered the future greatness of the man, kept him nine years about his person, thought him worthy of his personal instruction in the affairs of government, and honoured him with a confidence beyond his years. He alone was permitted to remain in the Emperor's presence, when he gave audience to foreign ambassadors—a proof that, even as a boy, he had already begun to merit the surname of the Silent. The Emperor was not ashamed even to confess openly, on one occasion, that this young man had often made suggestions which would have escaped his own sagacity. What expectations might not be formed of the intellect of a man who was disciplined in such a school!

William was twenty-three years old when Charles abdicated the government, and had already received from the latter two public marks of the highest esteem. The Emperor had intrusted to him, in preference to all the nobles of his court, the honourable office of conveying to his brother Ferdinand the Imperial Crown. When the Duke of Savoy, who commanded the Imperial army in the Netherlands, was called away to Italy by the exigency of his domestic affairs, the Emperor appointed him commander-in-chief, against the united representations of his military council, who declared it altogether hazardous to oppose so young a tyro in arms to the experienced generals of France. Absent, and unrecommended by any, he was preferred by the monarch to the laurel-crowned band of his heroes, and the result gave him no cause to repent of his choice.

The marked favour which the prince had enjoyed with the father, was, in itself, a sufficient ground for his exclusion from the confidence of the son. Philip, it appears, had laid it down for himself as a rule, to avenge the wrongs of the Spanish nobility, for the preference which Charles V. had, on all important occasions, shown to his Flemish nobles. Still stronger, however, were the secret motives which alienated him from the prince. William of Orange was one of those lean and pale men, who, according to Cæsar's words, "sleep not at night, and think too much," and before whom the most fearless spirits quail. The calm tranquillity of a never varying countenance, concealed a busy, ardent soul, which never ruffled even the veil behind which it worked, and was alike inaccessible to artifice and to love; a versatile, formidable, indefatigable mind, soft and ductile enough to be instantaneously moulded into all forms; guarded enough to lose itself in none; and strong enough to endure every vicissitude of fortune. A greater master in reading and in winning men's hearts, never existed than William. Not that, after the fashion of courts, his lips avowed a servility to which his proud heart gave the lie; but because he was neither too sparing nor too lavish of the marks of his esteem, and through a skilful economy of the favours which mostly bind men, he increased his real stock in them. The fruits of his meditation were as perfect as they were slowly formed; his resolves were as steadily and indomitably accomplished, as they were long in maturing. No obstacles could defeat the plan which he had once adopted as the best; no accidents frustrated it, for they all had been foreseen before they actually occurred. High as his feelings were raised above terror and joy, they were, nevertheless, subject in the same degree to fear; but his fear was earlier than the danger, and he was calm in tumult, because he had trembled in repose. William lavished his gold with a profuse hand, but he was a niggard of his moments. The hours of repast were the sole hours of relaxation, but these were exclusively devoted to his heart, his family, and his friends; this the modest deduction he allowed himself from the cares of his country. Here his brow was cleared with wine, seasoned by temperance, and a cheerful disposition; and no serious cares were permitted to enter this recess of enjoyment. His household was magnificent; the splendour of a numerous retinue, the number and respectability of those who surrounded his person, made his habitation resemble the court of a sovereign prince. A sumptuous hospitality, that master-spell of demagogues, was the goddess of his palace. Foreign princes and ambassadors found here a fitting reception and entertainment, which surpassed all that luxurious Belgium could elsewhere offer. A humble submissiveness to the government, bought off the blame and suspicion which this munificence might have thrown on his intentions. But this liberality secured for him the affections of the people, whom nothing gratified so much, as to see the riches of their country displayed before admiring foreigners, and the high pinnacle of fortune on which he stood, enhanced the value of the courtesy to which he condescended. No one, probably, was better fitted by nature for the leader of a conspiracy, than William the Silent. A comprehensive and intuitive glance into the past, the present, and the future; the talent for improving every favourable opportunity; a commanding influence over the minds of men, vast schemes, which only when viewed from a distance show form and symmetry; and bold calculations, which were wound up in the long chain of futurity; all these faculties he possessed, and kept, moreover, under the control of that free and enlightened virtue, which moves with firm step, even on the very edge of the abyss.

A man like this might, at other times, have remained unfathomed by his whole generation; but not so by the distrustful spirit of the age in which he lived. Philip II. saw quickly and deeply into a character, which, among good ones, most resembled his own. If he had not seen through him so clearly, his distrust of a man, in whom were united nearly all the qualities which he prized highest, and could best appreciate, would be quite inexplicable. But William had another and still more important point of contact with Philip II. He had learned his policy from the same master, and had become, it was to be feared, a more apt scholar. Not by making Machiavelli's '*Prince*' his study, but by having enjoyed the living instruction of a monarch, who reduced the book to practice, had he become versed in the perilous arts by which thrones rise and fall. In him, Philip had to deal with an antagonist, who was armed against his policy, and who, in a good cause, could also command the resources of a bad one. And it was exactly this last circumstance, which accounts for his having hated this man so implacably above all others of his day, and his having had so supernatural a dread of him.

The suspicion which already attached to the prince, was increased by the doubts which were entertained of his religious bias. So long as the Emperor, his benefactor, lived William believed in the pope; but it was feared, with good ground, that the predilection for the reformed religion, which had been imparted to his young heart, had never entirely left it. Whatever church he may, at certain periods of his life, have preferred, each might console itself with the reflection that none other possessed him more entirely. In later years, he went over to Calvinism with almost as little scruple, as, in his early childhood, he deserted the Lutheran profession for the Romish. He defended the rights of the Protestants, rather than their opinions, against Spanish oppression; not their faith, but their wrongs had made him their brother.

These general grounds for suspicion, appeared to be justified by a discovery of his real intentions, which accident had made. William had remained in France, as hostage for the peace of Chateau Cambray, in concluding which he had borne a part; and here, through the imprudence of Henry II., who imagined he spoke with a confidant of the King of Spain, he became acquainted with a secret plot, which the French and Spanish courts had formed against Protestants of both kingdoms. The prince hastened to communicate this important discovery to his friends in Brussels, whom it so nearly concerned, and the letters which he exchanged on the subject fell, unfortunately, into the hands of the King of Spain. Philip was less surprised at this decisive disclosure of William's sentiments, than incensed at the disappointment of his scheme; and the Spanish nobles, who had never forgiven the prince that moment, when in the last act of his life the greatest of Emperors leaned upon his shoulders, did not neglect this favourable opportunity of finally ruining, in the good opinion of their king, the betrayer of a state secret

Of a lineage no less noble than that of William, was Lamoral, Count Egmont and Prince of Gavre, a descendant of the Dukes of Gueldres, whose martial courage had wearied out the arms of Austria. His family was highly distinguished in the annals of the country; one of his ancestors had, under Maximilian, already filled the office of Stadtholder over Holland. Egmont's marriage with the Duchess Sabina of Bavaria, reflected additional lustre on the splendour of his birth, and made him powerful through the greatness of this alliance. Charles V. had, in the year 1516, conferred on him, at Utrecht, the order of the Golden Fleece; the wars of this Emperor were the school of his military genius, and the battle of St. Quentin and Gravelines made him the hero of his age. Every blessing of peace, for which a commercial people feel most grateful, brought to mind the remembrance of the victory by which it was accelerated, and Flemish pride, like a fond mother, exulted over the illustrious son of their country, who had filled all Europe with admiration. Nine children who grew up under the eyes of their fellow citizens, multiplied and drew closer the ties between him and his fatherland, and the people's grateful affection for the father, was kept alive by the sight of those who were dearest to him. Every appearance of Egmont in public, was a triumphal procession; every eye which was fastened upon him, recounted his history; his deeds lived in the plaudits of his companions in arms; at the games of chivalry, mothers pointed him out to their children. Affability, a noble and courteous demeanour, the amiable virtues of chivalry, adorned and graced his merits. His liberal soul shone forth on his open brow; his frankheartedness managed his secrets no better than his benevolence did his estate, and a thought was no sooner his, than it was the property of all. His religion was gentle and humane, but not very enlightened, because it derived its light from the heart, and not from his understanding. Egmont possessed more of conscience, than of fixed principles; his head had not given him a code of its own, but had merely learnt it by rote; the mere name of an action, therefore, was often with him sufficient for its condemnation. In his judgment, men were wholly bad or wholly good, and had not something bad or something good; in this system of morals, there was no middle term between vice and virtue; and consequently, a single good trait often decided his opinion of men. Egmont united all the eminent qualities which form the hero; he was a better soldier than the Prince of Orange, but far inferior to him as a statesman; the latter saw the world as it really was; Egmont viewed it in the magic mirror of an imagination, that embellished all that it reflected. Men, whom fortune has surprised with a reward, for which they can find no adequate ground in their actions, are, for the most part, very apt to forget the necessary con nexion between cause and effect, and to insert in the natural consequences of things a higher miraculous power, to which, as Cæsar to his fortune, they at last insanely trust. Such a character was Egmont. Intoxicated with the idea of his own merits, which the love and gratitude of his fellow citizens had exaggerated, he staggered on in this sweet reverie, as in a delightful world of dreams. He feared not, because he trusted to the deceitful pledge which destiny had given him of her favour, in the general love of the people, and he believed in its justice, because he himself was prosperous. Even the most terrible experience of Spanish perfidy, could not afterwards eradicate this confidence from his soul, and on the scaffold itself, his latest feeling was hope. A tender fear for his family kept his patriotic courage fettered by lower duties Because he trembled for property and life, he could not venture much for the republic. William of Orange broke with the throne, because its arbitrary power was offensive to his pride; Egmont was vain, and therefore valued the favours of the monarch. The former was a citizen of the world; Egmont had never been more than a Fleming.

Philip II. still stood indebted to the hero of St. Quentin, and the supreme stadtholdership of the Netherlands appeared the only appropriate reward for such great services. Birth and high station, the voice of the nation and personal abilities, spoke as loudly for Egmont as for Orange; and if the latter was to be passed by, it seemed that the former alone could supplant him.

Two such competitors, so equal in merit, might have embarrassed Philip in his choice, if he had ever seriously thought of selecting either of them for the appointment. But the pre-eminent qualities by which they supported their claim to this office, were the very cause of their rejection; and it was precisely the ardent desire of the nation for their election to it, that irrevocably annulled their title to the appointment. Philip's purpose would not be answered by a stadtholder in the Netherlands, who could command the good will and the energies of the people. Egmont's descent from the Duke of Gueldres, made him an hereditary foe of the house of Spain, and it seemed impolitic to place the supreme power in the hands of a man, to whom the idea might occur of revenging on the son of the oppressor, the oppression of his ancestor. The slight put on their favourites could give no just offence either to the nation or to themselves, for it might be pretended that the king passed over both, because he would not show a preference to either.

The disappointment of his hopes of gaining the regency, did not deprive the Prince of Orange of all expectation of establishing, more firmly, his influence in the Netherlands. Among the other candidates for this office, was also Christina, Duchess of Lorraine, and aunt of the king, who, as mediatrix of the peace of Chateau Cambray, had rendered important service to the crown. William aimed at the hand of her daughter, and he hoped to promote his suit by actively interposing his good offices for the mother; but he did not reflect that, through this very intercession, he ruined her cause. The Duchess Christina was rejected, not so much for the reason alleged, namely, the dependence of her territories on France made her an object of suspicion to the Spanish court, as because she was acceptable to the people of the Netherlands and the Prince of Orange.

MARGARET OF PARMA, REGENT OF THE NETHERLANDS.

While the general expectation was on the stretch, as to whom the future destinies of the provinces would be committed, there appeared on the frontiers of the country the Duchess Margaret of Parma, having been summoned by the king from Italy, to assume the government.

Margaret was a natural daughter of Charles V. and of a noble Flemish lady, named Vangeest, and born 1522. Out of regard for the honour of her mother's house, she was at first educated in obscurity; but her mother, who possessed more vanity than honour, was not very anxious to preserve the secret of her origin, and a princely education betrayed the daughter of the Emperor. While yet a child, she was intrusted to the Regent Margaret, her great aunt, to be brought up at Brussels, under her eye. This guardian she lost in her eighth year, and the care of her education devolved on Queen Mary of Hungary, the successor of Margaret in the regency. Her father had already affianced her, while yet in her fourth year, to a Prince of Ferrara; but this alliance being subsequently dissolved, she was betrothed to Alexander de Medicis, the new Duke of Florence, which marriage was, after the victorious return of the Emperor from Africa, actually consummated in Naples. In the first year of this unfortunate union, a violent death removed from her a husband who could not love her, and for the third time her hand was disposed of to serve the policy of her father. Octavius Farnese, a prince of thirteen years of age, and nephew of Paul III., obtained, with her person, the duchies of Parma and Piacenza as her portion. Thus, by a strange destiny, Margaret, at the age of maturity, was contracted to a boy, as in the years of infancy she had been sold to a man. Her disposition, which was anything but feminine, made this last alliance still more unnatural, for her taste and inclinations were masculine, and the whole tenour of her life belied her sex. After the example of her instructress, the Queen of Hungary, and her great aunt, the Duchess Mary of Burgundy, who met her death in this favourite sport, she was passionately fond of hunting, and had acquired in this pursuit such bodily vigour, that few men were better able to undergo its hardships and fatigues.

Her gait itself was so devoid of grace, that one was far more tempted to take her for a disguised man, than for a masculine woman; and Nature, whom she had derided by thus transgressing the limits of her sex, revenged itself finally upon her by a disease peculiar to men—the gout.

These unusual qualities were crowned by a monkish superstition, which was infused into her mind by Ignatius Loyola, her confessor and teacher. Among the charitable works and penances with which she mortified her vanity, one of the most remarkable was, that during Passion-Week, she yearly washed, with her own hands, the feet of a number of poor men, (who were most strictly forbidden to cleanse themselves beforehand,) waited on them at table like a servant, and sent them away with rich presents.

Nothing more is requisite than this last feature in her character, to account for the preference which the king gave her over all her rivals; but his choice was at the same time justified by excellent reasons of state. Margaret was born and also educated in the Netherlands. She had spent her early youth among the people, and had acquired much of their national manners. Two regents, (Duchess Margaret, and Queen Mary of Hungary,) under whose eyes she had grown up, had gradually initiated her into the maxims by which this peculiar people might be most easily governed; and they would also serve her as models. She did not want either in talents; and possessed, moreover, a particular turn for business, which she had acquired from her instructors, and had afterwards carried to greater perfection in the Italian school. The Netherlands had been, for a number of years, accustomed to female government; and Philip hoped, perhaps, that the sharp iron of tyranny, which he was about to use against them, would cut more gently, if wielded by the hands of a woman Some regard for his father, who at the time was still living, and was much attached to Margaret, may have in a measure, as it is asserted, influenced this choice; as it is also probable that the king wished to oblige the Duke of Parma, through this mark of attention to his wife, and thus to compensate for denying a request, which he was just then compelled to refuse him. As the territories of the duchess were surrounded by Philip's Italian States, and at all times exposed to his arms, he could, with the less danger, entrust the supreme power into her hands. For his full security, her son, Alexander Farnese, was to remain at his court as a pledge for her loyalty All these reasons were alone sufficiently weighty to turn the king's decision in her favour; but they became irresistible, when supported by the Bishop of Arras and the Duke of Alva The latter, as it appears, because he hated or envied all the other competitors; the former, because even then, in all probability, he anticipated, from the wavering disposition of this princess, abundant gratification for his ambition.

Philip received the new regent on the frontiers with a splendid cortège, and conducted her with magnificent pomp to Ghent, where the States General had been convoked. As he did not intend to return soon to the Netherlands, he desired, before he left them, to gratify the nation for once, by holding a solemn Diet, and thus giving a solemn sanction and the force of law to his previous regulations For the last time, he showed himself to his Netherlandish people, whose destinies were, from henceforth, to be dispensed from a mysterious distance. To enhance the splendour of this solemn day, Philip invested eleven knights with the Order of the

Golden Fleece, his sister being seated on a chair near himself, while he showed her to the nation as their future ruler All the grievances of the people, touching the edicts, the Inquisition, the detention of the Spanish troops, the taxes, and the illegal introduction of foreigners into the offices and ad ministration of the country, were brought forward in this Diet, and were hotly discussed by both parties; some of them were skilfully evaded, or apparently removed, others arbitrarily repelled. As the king was unacquainted with the language of the country, he addressed the nation through the mouth of the Bishop of Arras, recounted to them, with vainglorious ostentation, all the benefits of his government, assured them of his favour for the future, and once more recommended to the estates, in the most earnest manner, the preservation of the Catholic faith, and the extirpation of heresy. The Spanish troops, he promised, should in a few months evacuate the Netherlands, if only they would allow him time to recover from the numerous burdens of the last war, in order that he might be enabled to collect the means for paying the arrears of these troops; the fundamental laws of the nation should remain inviolate, the imposts should not be grievously burdensome, and the Inquisition should administer its duties with justice and moderation. In the choice of a supreme Stadtholder, he added, he had especially consulted the wishes of the nation, and had decided for a native of the country, who had been brought up in their manners and customs, and was attached to them by a love to her native land. He exhorted them, therefore, to show their gratitude by honouring his choice, and obeying his sister, the Duchess, as himself. Should, he concluded, unexpected obstacles oppose his return, he would send in his place his son, Prince Charles, who should reside in Brussels.

A few members of this assembly, more courageous than the rest, once more ventured on a final effort for liberty of conscience. Every people, they argued, ought to be treated according to their natural character, as every individual must in accordance to his bodily constitution. Thus, for example, the south may be considered happy under a certain degree of constraint, which would press intolerably on the north. Never, they added, would the Flemings consent to a yoke under which, perhaps, the Spaniards bowed with patience·

and rather than submit to it, would they undergo any extremity, if it was sought to force such a yoke upon them. This remonstrance was supported by some of the king's counsellors, who strongly urged the policy of mitigating the rigour of religious edicts. But Philip remained inexorable. Better not reign at all, was his answer, than reign over heretics!

According to an arrangement already made by Charles V., three councils or chambers were added to the regent, to assist her in the administration of state affairs. As long as Philip was himself present in the Netherlands, these courts had lost much of their power, and the functions of the first of them, the state council, were almost entirely suspended. Now, that he quitted the reins of government, they recovered their former importance. In the state council, which was to deliberate upon war and peace, and security against external foes, sat the Bishop of Arras, the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, the President of the Privy Council, Viglius Van Zuichem Van Aytta, and the Count of Barlaimont, President of the Chamber of Finance. All knights of the Golden Fleece, all privy counsellors, and counsellors of finance, as also the members of the great senate at Malines, which had been subjected by Charles V. to the Privy Council in Brussels, had a seat and vote in the Council of State, if expressly invited by the regent. The management of the royal revenues and crown lands was vested in the Chamber of Finance, and the Privy Council was occupied with the administration of justice, and the civil regulation of the country, and issued all letters of grace and pardon. The governments of the provinces, which had fallen vacant, were either filled up afresh, or the former governors were confirmed. Count Egmont received Flanders and Artois; the Prince of Orange, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and West Friesland; the Count of Aremberg, East Friesland, Overyssel, and Gröningen; the Count of Mansfeld, Luxemburg; Barlaimont, Namur; the Marquis of Bergen, Hainault, Chateau Cambray and Valenciennes; the Baron of Montigny, Tournay and its dependencies. Other provinces were given to some who have less claim to our attention Philip of Montmorency, Count of Hoorn, who had been succeeded by the Count of Megen in the government of Gueldres and Zütphen, was confirmed as admiral of the Belgian navy. Every governor of a province was, at the same time, a knight of the Golden Fleece, and member of the Council of State. Each had, in the province over which he presided, the command of the military force which protected it, the superintendence of the civil administration and the judicature; the governor of Flanders alone excepted, who was not allowed to interfere with the administration of justice. Brabant, alone, was placed under the immediate jurisdiction of the regent, who, according to custom, chose Brussels for her constant residence. The induction of the Prince of Orange into his governments was, properly speaking, an infraction of the constitution, since he was a foreigner; but several estates which he either himself possessed in the provinces, or managed as guardian of his son, his long residence in the country, and above all, the unlimited confidence the nation reposed in him, gave him substantial claims in default of a real title of citizenship.

The military force of the Low Countries consisted, in its full complement, of three thousand horse. At present, it did not much exceed two thousand, and was divided into fourteen squadrons, over which, besides the governors of the provinces, the Duke of Arschot, the Counts of Hoogstraten, Bossu, Roeux, and Brederode held the chief command. This cavalry which was scattered through all the seventeen provinces, was only to be called out on sudden emergencies. Insufficient as it was for any great undertaking, it was, nevertheless, fully adequate for the maintenance of internal order. Its courage had been approved in former wars, and the fame of its valour was diffused through the whole of Europe. In addition to this cavalry, it was also proposed to levy a body of infantry, but, hitherto, the states had refused their consent to it. Of foreign troops, there were still some German regiments in the service, which were waiting for their pay. The 4,000 Spaniards, respecting whom so many complaints had been made, were under two Spanish generals, Mendoza and Romero, and were in garrison in the frontier towns.

Among the Belgian nobles, whom the king especially distinguished in these new appointments, the names of Count Egmont and William of Orange stand conspicuous. However inveterate his hatred was of both, and particularly of the latter, Philip, nevertheless, gave them these public marks of his favour, because his scheme of vengeance was not yet fully ripe, and the people were enthusiastic in their devotion to them. The estates of both were declared exempt from taxes, the most lucrative governments were entrusted to them; and by offering them the command of the Spaniards, whom he left behind in the country, the king flattered them with a confidence, which he was very far from really reposing in them. But at the very time, when he obliged the prince with these public marks of his esteem, he privately inflicted the most cruel injury on him. Apprehensive lest an alliance with the powerful house of Lorraine might encourage this suspected vassal to bolder measures, he thwarted the negociation for a marriage between him and a princess of that family, and crushed his hopes on the very eve of their accomplishment; an injury which the prince never forgave. Nay, his hatred to the prince on one occasion even got completely the better of his natural dissimulation, and seduced him into a step, in which we entirely lose sight of Philip II. When he was about to embark at Flushing, and the nobles of the country attended him to the shore, he so far forgot himself as roughly to accost the prince, and openly to accuse him of being the author of the Flemish troubles. The prince answered temperately, that what had happened had been done by the provinces of their own suggestion, and on legitimate grounds. No, said Philip, seizing his hand and shaking it violently, not the provinces, but You! You! You! The prince stood mute with astonishment, and without waiting for the king's embarkation, wished him a safe journey and went back to the town.

Thus the enmity, which William had long harboured in his breast against the oppressor of a free people, was now rendered irreconcileable by private hatred; and this double incentive accelerated the great enterprise, which tore from the Spanish crown seven of its brightest jewels.

Philip had greatly deviated from his true character, in taking so gracious a leave of the Netherlands. The legal form of a diet, his promise to remove the Spaniards from the frontiers, the consideration of the popular wishes, which had led him to fill the most important offices of the country with the favourites of the people, and finally, the sacrifice which he made to the constitution, in withdrawing the Count of Feria from the Council of State, were marks of condescension, of which his magnanimity was never again guilty. But, in fact, he never stood in greater need of the good will of the states, that with their aid he might, if possible, clear off the great burden of debt which was still attached to the Netherlands from the former war. He hoped, therefore, by propitiating them through smaller sacrifices, to win approval of more important usurpations. He marked his departure with grace, for he knew in what hands he left them. The frightful scenes of death, which he intended for this unhappy people, were not to stain the splendour of majesty, which, like the Godhead, marks its course only with beneficence; that terrible distinction was reserved for his representatives. The establishment of the council of state was, however, intended rather to flatter the vanity of the Belgian nobility, than to impart to them any real influence. The historian Strada (who drew his informa- with regard to the regent from her own papers) has preserved a few articles of the secret instructions, which the Spanish ministry gave her. Amongst other things it is there stated, if she observed that the councils were divided by factions, or what would be far worse, prepared by private conferences before the session, and in league with one another, then she was to prorogue all the chambers, and dispose arbitrarily of the disputed articles in a more select council or committee. In this select committee, which was called the Consulta, sat the Archbishop of Arras, the President Viglius, and the Count of Barlaimont. She was to act in the same manner, if emergent cases required a prompt decision. Had this arrangement not been the work of an arbitrary despotism, it would perhaps have been justified by sound policy, and republican liberty itself might have tolerated it. In great assemblies, where many private interests and passions co-operate, where a numerous audience presents so great a temptation to the vanity of the orator, and parties often assail one another with unmannerly warmth, a decree can seldom be passed with that sobriety and mature deliberation which, if the members are properly selected, a smaller body readily admits of. In a numerous body of men, too, there is, we must suppose, a greater number of limited than of enlightened intellects, who through their equal right of vote, frequently turn the majority on the side of ignorance. A second maxim which the regent was especially to observe, was to select the verv members of council, who had voted against any decree, to carry it into execution. By this means, not only would the people be kept in ignorance of the originators of such a law, but the private quarrels also of the members would be restrained, and a greater freedom ensured in voting in compliance with the wishes of the court.

In spite of all these precautions, Philip would never have been able to leave the Netherlands with a quiet mind, so long as he knew that the chief power in the council of state, and the obedience of the provinces were in the hands of the suspected nobles. In order, therefore, to appease his fears from this quarter, and also, at the same time, to assure himself of the fidelity of the regent, he subjected her, and through her all the affairs of the judicature, to the higher control of the Bishop of Arras. In this single individual, he possessed an adequate counterpoise to the most dreaded cabal. To him, as to an infallible oracle of majesty, the duchess was referred, and in him there watched a stern supervisor of her administration. Among all his contemporaries, Granvella was the only one whom Philip II. appears to have excepted from his universal distrust; as long as he knew that this man was in Brussels, he could sleep calmly in Segovia. He left the Netherlands in September, 1559, was saved from a storm which sank his fleet, and landed at Laredo in Biscay, and in his gloomy joy thanked the Deity who had preserved him, by a detestable vow. In the hands of a priest, and of a woman, was placed the dangerous helm of the Netherlands; and the dastardly tyrant escaped in his oratory at Madrid the supplications, the complaints, and the curses of the people.

BOOK II.

CARDINAL GRANVELLA.

Anthony Perenot, Bishop of Arras, subsequently Archbishop of Malines, and Metropolitan of all the Netherlands, who, under the name of Cardinal Granvella, has been immortalized by the hatred of his contemporaries, was born in the year 1516, at Besançon in Burgundy. His father, Nicolaus Perenot, the son of a blacksmith, had risen by his own merits to be the private secretary of Margaret, Duchess of Savoy, at that time Regent of the Netherlands. In this post, he was noticed for his habits of business by Charles V., who took him into his own service, and employed him in several important negociations. For twenty years he was a member of the Emperor's cabinet, and filled the offices of privy counsellor and keeper of the king's seal, and shared in all the state secrets of that monarch. He acquired a large fortune. His honours, his influence, and his political knowledge, were inherited by his son, Anthony Perenot, who in his early years gave proofs of the great capacity, which subsequently opened to him so distinguished a career. Anthony had cultivated, at several colleges, the talents with which nature had so lavishly endowed him, and in some respects had an advantage over his father. He soon showed that his own abilities were sufficient to maintain the advantageous position, which the merits of another had procured him. He was twenty-four years old, when the Emperor sent him as his plenipotentiary to the ecclesiastical council of Trent, where he delivered the first specimen of that eloquence, which in the sequel gave him so complete an ascendancy over two kings. Charles employed him in several difficult embassies, the duties of which he fulfilled to the satisfaction of his sovereign, and when finally, that Emperor resigned the sceptre to his son, he made that costly present complete, by giving him a minister who could help him to wield it.

Granvella opened his new career at once, with the greatest masterpiece of political genius, in passing so easily from the favour of such a father into equal consideration with such a son. And he soon proved himself deserving it. At the secret negociations, of which the Duchess of Lorraine had, in 1558, been the medium between the French and Spanish ministers at Peronne, he planned, conjointly with the Cardinal of Lorraine, that conspiracy against the Protestants, which was afterwards matured, but also betrayed, at Chateau Cambray, where Perenot, likewise, assisted in effecting the so-called peace.

A deeply penetrating, comprehensive intellect, an unusual facility in conducting great and intricate affairs, and the most extensive learning, were wonderfully united in this man, with persevering industry and never-wearying patience, while his enterprising genius was associated with thoughtful mechanical regularity. Day and night, the state found him vigilant and collected; the most important and the most insignificant things were alike weighed by him with scrupulous attention. Not unfrequently he employed five secretaries at one time, dictating to them in different languages, of which he is said to have spoken seven. What his penetrating mind had slowly matured, acquired in his lips both force and grace, and truth, set forth by his persuasive eloquence, irresistibly carried away all hearers. He was tempted by none of the passions, which make slaves of most men. His integrity was incorruptible. With shrewd penetration, he saw through the disposition of his master, and could read in his features his whole train of thought, and as it were, the approaching form in the shadow which outran it. With an artifice rich in resources, he came to the aid of Philip's more inactive mind, formed into perfect thought his master's crude ideas while they yet hung on his lips, and liberally allowed him the glory of the invention. Granvella understood the difficult and useful art of depreciating his own talents; of making his own genius the seeming slave of another; thus he ruled while he concealed his sway. In this manner only could Phillip II. be governed. Content with a silent but real power, Granvella did not grasp insatiably at new and outward marks of it, which with lesser minds, are ever the most coveted objects; but every new distinction seemed to sit upon him as easily as the oldest. No wonder if such extraordinary endowments had alone gained him the favour of his master; but a large and valuable treasure of political secrets and experiences, which the active life of Charles V. had accumulated, and had deposited in the mind of this man, made him indispensable to his successor. Self-sufficient as the latter was, and accustomed to confide in his own understanding, his timid and crouching policy was fain to lean on a superior mind, and to aid its own irresolution not only by precedent, but also by the influence and example of another. No political matter which concerned the royal interest, even when Philip himself was in the Netherlands, was decided without the intervention of Granvella; and when the king embarked for Spain, he made the new regent the same valuable present of the minister, which he himself had received from the Emperor, his father.

Common as it is for despotic princes to bestow unlimited confidence on the creatures whom they have raised from the dust, and of whose greatness they themselves are, in a measure, the creators, the present is no ordinary instance; pre-eminent must have been the qualities, which could so far conquer the selfish reserve of such a character as Philip's, as to gain his confidence, nay, even to win him into familiarity. The slightest ebullition of the most allowable self-respect, which might have tempted him to assert, however slightly, his claim to any idea which the king had once ennobled as his own, would have cost him his whole influence. He might gratify, without restraint, the lowest passions of voluptuousness, of rapacity, and of revenge, but the only one in which he really took delight, the sweet consciousness of his own superiority and power, he was constrained carefully to conceal from the suspicious glance of the despot. He voluntarily disclaimed all the eminent qualities, which were already his own, in order, as it were, to receive them a second time from the generosity of the king. His happiness seemed to flow from no other source, no other person could have a claim upon his gratitude. The purple, which was sent to him from Rome, was not assumed until the royal permission reached him from Spain; by laying it down on the steps of the throne, he appeared, in a measure, to receive it first from the hands of Majesty. Less politic, Alva erected a trophy in Antwerp, and inscribed his own name under the victory, which he had won as the servant of the crown—but Alva carried with him to the grave the displeasure of his master. He had invaded with audacious hand the royal prerogative, by drawing immediately at the fountain of immortality.

Three times, Granvella changed his master, and three times he succeeded in rising to the highest favour. With the same facility with which he had guided the settled pride of an autocrat, and the sly egotism of a despot, he knew how to manage the delicate vanity of a woman. His business between himself and the regent, even when they were in the same house, was, for the most part, transacted by the medium of notes, a custom which draws its date from the times of Augustus and Tiberius. When the regent was in any perplexity, these notes were interchanged from hour to hour. He probably adopted this expedient, in the hope of eluding the watchful jealousy of the nobility, and concealing from them, in part at least, his influence over the regent. Perhaps, too, he also believed that, by this means, his advice would become more permanent; and, in case of need, this written testimony would be at hand to shield him from blame. But the vigilance of the nobles made this caution vain, and it was soon known in all the provinces, that nothing was determined upon without the minister's advice.

Granvella possessed all the qualities requisite for a perfect statesman in a monarchy governed by despotic principles, but was absolutely unqualified for republics which are governed by kings. Educated between the throne and the confessional, he knew of no other relation between man and man than that of rule and subjection; and the innate consciousness of his own superiority gave him a contempt for others. His policy wanted pliability, the only virtue which was here indispensable to its success. He was naturally overbearing and insolent, and the royal authority only gave arms to the natural impetuosity of his disposition and the imperiousness of his order. He veiled his own ambition beneath the interests of the crown, and made the breach between the nation and the king incurable, because it would render him indispensable to the latter. He revenged on the nobility the lowliness of his own origin; and, after the fashion of all those who have risen by their own merits, he valued the advantages of birth below those by which he had raised himself to distinction. The Protestants saw in him their most implacable foe; to his charge were laid all the burdens which oppressed the country, and they pressed the more heavily because they came from him. Nay, he was even accused of having brought back to severity the milder sentiments, to which the urgent remonstrances of the provinces had at last disposed the monarch. The Netherlands execrated him as the most terrible enemy of their liberties, and the originator of all the misery which subsequently came upon them.

1559. Philip had evidently left the provinces too soon The new measures of the government were still strange to the people, and could receive sanction and authority from his presence alone; the new machines, which he had brought into play, required to be kept in motion by a dreaded and powerful hand, and to have their first movements watched and regulated. He now exposed his minister to all the angry passions of the people, who no longer felt restrained by the fetters of the royal presence; and he delegated to the weak arm of a subject the execution of projects, in which Majesty itself, with all its powerful supports, might have failed.

The land, indeed, flourished; and a general prosperity appeared to testify to the blessings of the peace which had so lately been bestowed upon it. An external repose deceived the eye, for within raged all the elements of discord. If the foundations of religion totter in a country, they totter not alone; the audacity which begins with things sacred ends with things profane. The successful attack upon the hierarchy had awakened a spirit of boldness, and a desire to assail authority in general, and to test laws as well as dogmas—duties as well as opinions. The fanatical boldness, with which men had learned to discuss and decide upon the affairs of eternity, might change its subject matter; the contempt for life and property which religious enthusiasm had taught, could metamorphose timid citizens into foolhardy rebels. A female government of nearly forty years, had given the nation room to assert their liberty; continual wars, of which the Netherlands had been the theatre, had introduced a licence with them, and the right of the stronger had usurped the place of law and order. The provinces were filled with foreign adventurers and fugitives; generally men bound by no ties of country, family, or property, who had brought with them, from their unhappy homes, the seeds of insubordination and rebellion The repeated spectacles of torture and of death had rudely burst the tenderer threads of moral feeling, and had given an unnatural harshness to the national character.

Still the rebellion would have crouched timorously and silently on the ground, if it had not found a support in the nobility. Charles V. had spoiled the Flemish nobles of the Netherlands by making them the participators of his glory, by fostering their national pride, by the marked preference he showed for them over the Castilian nobles, and by opening an arena to their ambition in every part of his empire. In the late war with France, they had really deserved this preference from Philip; the advantages which the king reaped from the peace of Chateau Cambray were, for the most part, the fruits of their valour, and they now sensibly missed the gratitude on which they had so confidently reckoned. Moreover, the separation of the German empire from the Spanish monarchy, and the less warlike spirit of the new government, had greatly narrowed their sphere of action, and except in their own country, little remained for them to gain. And Philip now appointed his Spaniards, where Charles V. had employed the Flemings. All the passions, which the preceding government had raised and kept employed, still survived in peace; and in default of a legitimate object, these unruly feelings found, unfortunately, ample scope in the grievances of their country. Accordingly, the claims and wrongs which had been long supplanted by new passions, were now drawn from oblivion. By his late appointments, the king had satisfied no party; for those even who obtained offices were not much more content than those who were entirely passed over, because they had calculated on something better than they got. William of Orange had received four governments, (not to reckon some smaller dependencies which, taken together, were equivalent to a fifth,) but William had nourished hopes of Flanders and Brabant. He and Count Egmont forgot what had really fallen to their share, and only remembered that they had lost the regency. The majority of the nobles were either plunged into debt by their own extravagance, or had willingly enough been drawn into it by the government. Now that they were excluded from the prospect of lucrative appointments, they at once saw themselves exposed to poverty, which pained them the more sensibly, when they contrasted the splendour of the affluent citizens with their own necessities. In the extremities to which they were reduced, many would have readily assisted in the commission even of crimes; how then could they resist the seductive offers of the Calvinists, who liberally repaid them for their intercession and protection? Lastly, many whose estates were past redemption, placed their last hope in a general devastation, and stood prepared, at the first favourable moment, to cast the torch of discord into the Republic.

This threatening aspect of the public mind, was rendered still more alarming by the unfortunate vicinity of France

What Philip dreaded for the provinces, was there already accomplished. The fate of that kingdom prefigured to him the destiny of his Netherlands, and the spirit of rebellion found there a seductive example. A similar state of things had, under Francis I. and Henry II., scattered the seeds of innovation in that kingdom; a similar fury of persecution, and a like spirit of faction had encouraged its growth. Now, Huguenots and Catholics were struggling in a dubious contest, furious parties disorganized the whole monarchy, and were violently hurrying this once-powerful state to the brink of destruction. Here, as there, private interest, ambition, and party feeling might veil themselves under the names of religion and patriotism, and the passions of a few citizens drive the entire nation to take up arms. The frontiers of both countries merged in Walloon Flanders; the rebellion might, like an agitated sea, cast its waves as far as this: would a country be closed against it, whose language, manners, and character wavered between those of France and Belgium? As yet, the government had taken no census of its Protestant subjects in these countries, but the new sect, it was aware, was a vast, compact republic, which extended its roots through all the monarchies of Christendom, and the slighest disturbance in any of its most distant members vibrated to its centre. It was, as it were, a chain of threatening volcanoes, which, united by subterraneous passages, ignite at the same moment with alarming sympathy. The Netherlands were, necessarily, open to all nations, because they derived their support from all. Was it possible for Philip to close a commercial state as easily as he could Spain? If he wished to purify these provinces from heresy, it was necessary for him to commence by extirpating it in France.

It was in this state that Granvella found the Netherlands at the beginning of his administration (1560).

To restore to these countries the uniformity of papistry, to break the co-ordinate power of the nobility and the states, and to exalt the royal authority on the ruins of republican freedom, was the great object of Spanish policy, and the express commission of the new minister. But obstacles stood in the way of its accomplishment; to conquer these demanded the invention of new resources, the application of new machinery. The Inquisition, indeed and the religious edicts appeared sufficient to check the contagion of heresy; but the latter required superintendence, and the former able instruments, for its now extended jurisdiction. The church constitution continued the same as it had been in earlier times when the provinces were less populous, when the church still enjoyed universal repose, and could be more easily overlooked and controlled. A succession of several centuries, which changed the whole interior form of the provinces, had left the form of the hierarchy unaltered, which, moreover, was protected from the arbitrary will of its ruler by the particular privileges of the provinces. All the seventeen provinces were parcelled out under four bishops, who had their seats at Arras, Tournay, Cambray, and Utrecht, and were subject to the primates of Rheims and Cologne. Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had, indeed, meditated an increase in the number of the bishops, to meet the wants of the increasing population, but, unfortunately, in the excitement of a life of pleasure, had abandoned the project Ambition and lust of conquest withdrew the mind of Charles the Bold from the internal concerns of his kingdom, and Maximilian had already too many subjects of dispute with the states, to venture to add to their number by proposing this change. A stormy reign prevented Charles V. from the execution of this extensive plan, which Philip II. now undertook as a bequest from all these princes. The moment had now arrived when the urgent necessities of the church would excuse the innovation, and the leisure of peace favoured its accomplishment. With the prodigious crowd of people from all the countries of Europe who were crowded together in the towns of the Netherlands, a multitude of religious opinions had also grown up; and it was impossible that religion could any longer be effectually superintended by so few eyes, as were formerly sufficient. While the number of bishops was so small, their districts must, of necessity, have been proportionably extensive, and four men could not be adequate to maintain the purity of the faith through so wide a district.

The jurisdiction, which the Archbishops of Cologne and Rheims exercised over the Netherlands, had long been a stumbling block to the government, which could not look on this territory as really its own property, so long as such an important branch of power was still wielded by foreign hands.

To snatch this prerogative from the alien archbishops; by new and active agents to give fresh life and vigour to the superintendence of the faith, and, at the same time, to strengthen the number of the partisans of government at the diet, no more effectual means could be devised, than to increase the number of bishops. Resolved upon doing this, Philip II. ascended the throne; but he soon found that a change in the hierarchy would inevitably meet with warm opposition from the provinces, without whose consent, nevertheless, it would be vain to attempt it. Philip foresaw that the nobility would never approve of a measure which would so strongly augment the royal party, and take from the aristocracy the preponderance of power in the diet. The revenues, too, for the maintenance of these new bishops, must be diverted from the abbots and monks, and these formed a considerable part of the states of the realm. He had, besides, to fear the opposition of the Protestants, who would not fail to act secretly in the diet against him. On these accounts, the whole affair was discussed at Rome with the greatest possible secrecy. Instructed by, and as the agent of, Granvella, Francis Sonnoi, a priest of Louvain, came before Paul IV., to inform him how extensive the provinces were, how thriving and populous, how luxurious in their prosperity. But, he continued, in the immoderate enjoyment of liberty the true faith is neglected, and heretics prosper. To obviate this evil, the Romish See must have recourse to extraordinary measures. It was not difficult to prevail on the Romish pontiff to make a change, which would enlarge the sphere of his own jurisdiction.

Paul IV. appointed a tribunal of seven cardinals to deliberate upon this important matter; but death called him away, and he left to his successor, Pius IV., the duty of carrying their advice into execution. The welcome tidings of the pope's determination reached the king in Zealand, when he was just on the point of setting sail for Spain, and the minister was secretly charged with the dangerous reform. The new constitution of the hierarchy was published in 1560; in addition to the then existing four bishoprics, thirteen new ones were established, according to the number of seventeen provinces, and four of them were raised into archbishoprics. Six of these episcopal sees, viz., in Antwerp, Herzogenbusch, Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and Ruremonde, were placed under the archbishopric of Malines; five others. Haarlem, Middelburg, Leuwarden, Deventer, and Gröningen, under the archbishopric of Utrecht; and the remaining four, Arras, Tournay, St. Omer, and Namur, which lie nearest to France, and have language, character, and manners in common with that country, under the archbishopric of Cambray. Malines, situated in the middle of Brabant, and in the centre of all the seventeen provinces, was made the primacy of all the rest, and was, with several rich abbeys, the reward of Granvella. The revenues of the new bishoprics were provided by an appropriation of the treasures of the cloisters and abbeys, which had accumulated from pious benefactions during centuries. Some of the abbots were raised to the episcopal throne, and with the possession of their cloisters and prelacies, retained also the vote at the diet which was attached to them. At the same time, to every bishopric nine prebends were attached, and bestowed on the most learned jurisconsultists and theologians, who were to support the Inquisition and the bishop in his spiritual office. Of these, the two who were most deserving by knowledge, experience, and unblemished life, were to be constituted actual inquisitors, and to have had the first voice in the Synods. To the Archbishop of Malines, as metropolitan of all the seventeen provinces, the full authority was given to appoint, or at discretion depose, archbishops and bishops, and the Romish See was only to give its ratification to his acts.

At any other period, the nation would have received with gratitude, and approved of such a measure of church reform. since it was fully called for by circumstances, was conducive to the interests of religion, and absolutely indispensable for the moral reformation of the monkhood. Now the temper of the times saw in it nothing but a hateful change. Universal was the indignation with which it was received. A cry was raised that the constitution was trampled under foot, the rights of the nation violated; and that the Inquisition was already at the door, and would soon open here, as in Spain, its bloody tribunal. The people beheld with dismay these new servants of arbitrary power and of persecution. The nobility saw in it nothing but a strengthening of the royal authority by the addition of fourteen votes in the states' assembly, and a withdrawal of the firmest prop of their freedom, the balance of the royal and the civil power. The old bishops complained of the diminution of their incomes, and the circumscription of their sees; the abbots and monks had not only lost power and income, but had received in exchange rigid censors of their morals. Noble and simple, laity and clergy, united against the common foe, and while all singly struggled for some petty private interest, the cry appeared to come from the formidable voice of patriotism.

Among all the provinces, Brabant was loudest in its opposition. The inviolability of its church constitution was one of the important privileges which it had reserved in the remarkable charter of the "Joyful Entry"—statutes which the sovereign could not violate, without releasing the nation from its allegiance to him. In vain did the university of Louvain assert that, in disturbed times of the church, a privilege lost its power, which had been granted in the period of its tranquillity. The introduction of the new bishoprics into the constitution was thought to shake the whole fabric of liberty. The prelacies, which were now transferred to the bishops, must henceforth serve another rule, than the advantage of the province, of whose states they had been members. The once free patriotic citizens were to be instruments of the Romish See, and obedient tools of the archbishop, who again, as first prelate of Brabant, had the immediate control over them. The freedom of voting was gone, because the bishops, as servile spies of the crown, made every one fearful. "Who," it was asked, "will after this venture to raise his voice in Parliament before such observers, or, in their presence, dare to protect the rights of the nation against the rapacious hands of the government? They will trace out the resources of the provinces, and betray to the crown the secrets of our freedom and our property. They will obstruct the way to all offices of honour; we shall soon see the courtiers of the king succeed the present men; the children of foreigners will, for the future, fill the Parliament, and the private interest of their patron will guide their venal votes." "What an act of oppression," rejoined the monks, "to pervert to other objects the pious designs of our holy institutions, to contemn the inviolable wishes of the dead, and to take that which a devout charity had deposited in our chests for the relief of the unfortunate, and make it subservient to the luxury of bishops, thus inflating their arrogant pomp with the plunder of the poor?" Not only the abbots and monks, who really did suffer by this act of appropriation, but every family which could flatter itself with the slightest hope of enjoying, at some time or other, even in the most remote posterity, the benefit of this monastic foundation, felt this disappointment of their distant expectations as much as if they had suffered an actual injury, and the wrongs of a few abbot prelates became the concern of a whole nation.

Historians have not omitted to record the covert proceedings of William of Orange during this general commotion, who laboured to conduct to one end these various and conflicting passions. At his instigation, the people of Brabant petitioned the regent for an advocate and protector, since they alone, of all his Flemish subjects, had the misfortune to unite, in one and the same person, their counsel and their ruler Had the demand been granted, their choice could fall on no other than the Prince of Orange. But Granvella, with his usual presence of mind, broke through the snare. "The man who receives this office," he declared in the state council, "will, I hope, see that he divides Brabant with the king!" The long delay of the papal bull, which was kept back by a misunderstanding between the Romish and Spanish courts, gave the disaffected an opportunity to combine for a common object. In perfect secrecy, the states of Brabant despatched an extraordinary messenger to Pius IV., to urge their wishes in Rome itself. The ambassador was provided with important letters of recommendation from the Prince of Orange, and carried with him considerable sums to pave his way to the father of the church. At the same time, a public letter was forwarded from the city of Antwerp to the King of Spain, containing the most urgent representations, and supplicating him to spare that flourishing commercial town from the threatened innovation. They knew, it was stated, that the intentions of the monarch were the best, and that the institution of the new bishops was likely to be highly conducive to the maintenance of true religion; but the foreigners could not be convinced of this, and on them depended the prosperity of their town. Among them the most groundless rumours would be as perilous as the most true

The first embassy was discovered in time, and its object disappointed by the prudence of the regent; by the second, the town of Antwerp gained so far its point, that it was to remain without a bishop, at least until the personal arrival of the king, which was talked of.

The example and success of Antwerp gave the signal of opposition to all the other towns, for which a new bishop was intended. It is a remarkable proof of the hatred to the Inquisition, and the unanimity of the Flemish towns at this date, that they preferred to renounce all the advantages which the residence of a bishop would necessarily bring to their local trade, rather than by their consent promote that abhorred tribunal, and thus act in opposition to the interests of the whole nation. Deventer, Ruremond, and Leuwarden, placed themselves in determined opposition, and (1561) successfully carried their point; in the other towns, the bishops were, in spite of all remonstrances, forcibly inducted Utrecht, Haarlem, St. Omer, and Middelburg were among the first, which opened their gates to them; the remaining towns followed their example; but in Malines and Herzogenbusch the bishops were received with very little respect. When Granvella made his solemn entry into the former town not a single nobleman showed himself, and his triumph was wanting in every thing that could make it real, because those remained away over whom it was meant to be celebrated.

In the mean time, too, the period had elapsed within which the Spanish troops were to have left the country, and, as yet, there was no appearance of their being withdrawn People perceived with terror the real cause of the delay, and suspicion lent it a fatal connexion with the Inquisition. The detention of these troops, as it rendered the nation more vigilant and distrustful, made it more difficult for the minister to proceed with the other innovations, and yet, he would fain not deprive himself of this powerful and apparently indispensable aid, in a country where all hated him, and in the execution of a commission to which all were opposed. At last, however, the regent saw herself compelled by the universal murmurs of discontent, to urge most earnestly upon the king the necessity of the withdrawal of the troops. "The provinces," she writes to Madrid, "have unanimously declared that they would never again be induced to grant the extraordinary taxes required by the government, as long as word was not kept with them in this matter. The danger of a revolt was far more imminent, than that of an attack by the French Protestants, and if a rebellion was to take place in the Netherlands, these forces would be too weak to repress it, and there was not sufficient money in the treasury to enlist new." By delaying his answer, the king still sought at least to gain time, and the reiterated representations of the regent would still have remained ineffectual, if, fortunately for the provinces, a loss, which he had lately suffered from the Turks, had not compelled him to employ these troops in the Mediterranean. He, therefore, at last consented to their departure; they were embarked 1561, in Zealand, and the exulting shouts of all the provinces accompanied their departure.

Meanwhile, Granvella ruled in the council of state almost uncontrolled. All officers, secular and spiritual, were given away through him; his opinion prevailed against the unanimous voice of the whole assembly. The regent herself was governed by him. He had contrived to manage so that her appointment was made out for two years only, and by this expedient he kept her always in his power. It seldom happened that any important affair was submitted to the other members, and if it really did occur, it was only such as had been long before decided, to which it was only necessary for formality's sake to gain their sanction. Whenever a royal letter was read, Viglius received instructions to omit all such passages as were underlined by the minister. It often happened that this correspondence with Spain laid open the weakness of the government, or the anxiety felt by the regent, with which it was not expedient to inform the members, whose loyalty was distrusted. If again it occurred that the opposition gained a majority over the minister, and insisted with determination on an article, which he could not well put off any longer, he sent it to the ministry at Madrid for their decision, by which he at least gained time, and in any case was certain to find support. With the exception of the Count of Barlaimont, the President Viglius, and a few others, all the other counsellors were but superfluous figures in the senate, and the minister's behaviour to them marked the small value which he placed upon their friendship and adherence. No wonder that men, whose pride had been so greatly indulged by the flattering attentions of sovereign princes, and to whom, as to the idols of their country, their fellow citizens paid the most reverential submission, should be highly indignant at this arrogance of a plebeian. Many of them had been personally insulted by Granvella. The Prince of Orange was well aware that it was he who had prevented his marriage with the Princess of Lorraine, and that he had also endeavoured to break off the negociations for another alliance with the Princess of Savoy. He had deprived Count Horn of the government of Gueldres and Zütphen, and had kept for himself an abbey, which Count Egmont had in vain exerted himself to obtain for a relation. Confident of his superior power, he did not even think it worth while to conceal from the nobility his contempt for them, and which, as the rule, marked his whole administration; William of Orange was the only one with whom he deemed it advisable to dissemble. Although he really believed himself to be raised far above all the laws of fear and of decorum, still in this point, however, his confident arrogance misled him, and he erred no less against policy than he sinned against propriety. In the existing posture of affairs, the government could hardly have adopted a worse measure than that of throwing disrespect on the nobility. It had it in its power to flatter the prejudices and feelings of the aristocracy, and thus artfully and imperceptibly win them over to its plans, and through them, subvert the edifice of national liberty. Now it admonished them, most inopportunely, of their duties, their dignity, and their power; calling upon them even to be patriots, and to devote to the cause of true greatness, an ambition which hitherto it had inconsiderately repelled. To carry into effect the ordinances, it required the active co-operation of the lieutenant-governors; no wonder, however, that the latter showed but little zeal to afford this assistance. On the contrary, it is highly probable that they silently laboured to augment the difficulties of the minister, and to subvert his measures, and, through his ill success, to diminish the king's confidence in him, and expose his administration to contempt. The rapid progress which, in spite of those horrible edicts, the Reformation made during Granvella's administration in the Netherlands, is evidently to be ascribed to the lukewarmness of the nobility in opposing it. If the minister had been sure of the nobles, he might have despised the fury of the mob, which would have impotently dashed itself against the dreaded barriers of the throne. The sufferings of the citizens lingered long in tears and sighs, until the arts and the example of the nobility called forth a louder expression of them.

Meanwhile, the inquisitions into religion were carried on with renewed vigour, by the crowd of new labourers, (1561, 1562,) and the edicts against heretics, were enforced with fearful obedience. But the critical moment when this detestable remedy might have been applied, was allowed to pass by; the nation had become too strong and vigorous for such rough treatment. The new religion could now be extirpated only by the death of all its professors. The present executions were but so many alluring exhibitions of its excellence, so many scenes of its triumphs and radiant virtue. The heroic greatness with which the victims died, made converts to the opinions for which they perished. One martyr gained ten new proselytes. Not in towns only, or villages, but on the very highways, in the boats and public carriages, disputes were held, touching the dignity of the Pope, the Saints, Purgatory, and Indulgences, and sermons were preached and men converted. From the country and from the towns, the common people rushed in crowds to rescue the prisoners of the Holy Tribunal from the hands of its satellites, and the municipal officers, who ventured to support it with the civil forces, were pelted with stones. Multitudes accompanied the Protestant preachers, whom the Inquisition pursued, bore them on their shoulders to and from church, and at the risk of their lives, concealed them from their persecutors. The first province, which was seized with the fanatical spirit of rebellion, was, as had been expected, Walloon Flanders. A French Calvinist, by name Lannoi, set himself up in Tournay as a worker of miracles, where he hired a few women to simulate diseases, and to pretend to be cured by him. He preached in the woods near the town, drew the people in great numbers after him, and scattered in their minds the seeds of rebellion. Similar teachers appeared in Lille and Valenciennes, but in the latter place, the municipal functionaries succeeded in seizing the persons of these incendiaries, while, however, they delayed to execute them, their followers increased so rapidly, that they became sufficiently strong to break open the prisons, and forcibly deprive justice of its victims. Troops at last were brought into the town, and order restored. But this trifling occurrence had, for a moment, withdrawn the veil which had hitherto concealed the strength of the Protestant party, and allowed the minister to compute their prodigious numbers. In Tournay alone, 5000 at one time had been seen attending the sermons, and not many less in Valenciennes. What might not be expected from the northern provinces, where liberty was greater, and the seat of government more remote, and where the vicinity of Germany and Denmark multiplied the sources of contagion? One slight provocation had sufficed to draw from its concealment so formidable a multitude. How much greater was, perhaps, the number of those who, in their hearts, acknowledged the new sect, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to publish their adhesion to it. This discovery greatly alarmed the regent. The scanty obedience paid to the edicts, the wants of the exhausted treasury, which compelled her to impose new taxes, and the suspicious movements of the Huguenots on the French frontiers, still farther increased her anxiety. At the same time, she received a command from Madrid to send off two thousand Flemish cavalry to the army of the Queen Mother in France, who, in the distresses of the religious war, had recourse to Philip II. for assistance. Every affair of faith, in whatever land it might be, was made by Philip his own business. He felt it as keenly as any catastrophe which could befall his own house, and in such cases always stood ready to sacrifice his means to foreign necessities. If it were interested motives that here swayed him, they were at least kingly and grand, and the bold support of his principles wins our admiration, as much as their cruelty withholds our esteem.

The regent laid before the Council of State the royal will on the subject of these troops, but with a very warm opposition on the part of the nobility. Count Egmont and the Prince of Orange declared that the time was ill chosen, for stripping the Netherlands of troops, when the aspect of affairs rendered rather the enlistment of new levies advisable. The movements of the troops in France momentarily threatened a surprise, and the commotions within the provinces demanded, more than ever, the utmost vigilance on the part of the government. Hitherto, they said, the German Protestants had looked idly on during the struggles of their brethren in the faith; but will they continue to do so, especially when we are lending our aid to strengthen their enemy? By thus acting, shall we not rouse their vengeance against us, and call their arms into the northern Netherlands? Nearly the whole Council of State joined in this opinion, their representations were energetic and not to be gainsayed. The regent herself, as well as the minister, could not but feel their truth, and their own interests appeared to forbid obedience to the royal mandate. Would it not be impolitic to withdraw from the Inquisition its sole prop, by removing the larger portion of the army, and in a rebellious country to leave themselves without defence, dependent on the arbitrary will of an arrogant aristocracy? While the regent, divided between the royal commands, the urgent importunity of her council, and her own fears, could not venture to come to a decision, William of Orange rose and proposed the assembling of the States General. But nothing could have inflicted a more fatal blow on the supremacy of the Crown, than by yielding to this advice to put the nation in mind of its power and its rights. No measure could be more hazardous at the present moment. The danger which was thus gathering over the minister did not escape him; a sign from him warned the regent to break off the consultation and adjourn the council. "The government," he writes to Madrid, "can do nothing more injurious to itself than to consent to the assembling of the states. Such a step is at all times perilous, because it tempts the nation to test and restrict the rights of the crown; but it is many times more objectionable, at the present moment, when the spirit of rebellion is already widely spread amongst us, when the abbots, exasperated at the loss of their income, will neglect nothing to impair the dignity of the bishops, when the whole nobility and all the deputies from the towns are led by the arts of the Prince of Orange, and the disaffected can securely reckon on the assistance of the nation." This representation, which at least was not wanting in sound sense, did not fail in having the desired effect on the king's mind The assembling of the states was rejected once and for ever, the penal statutes against the heretics were renewed in all their rigour, and the regent was directed to hasten the despatch of the required auxiliaries.

But to this, the Council of State would not consent. All that she obtained was, instead of the troops, a supply of money for the Queen Mother, which at this crisis was still more welcome to her. In place, however, of assembling the states, and in order to beguile the nation with, at least, the semblance of republican freedom, the regent summoned the governors of the provinces and the knights of the Golden Fleece to a special congress at Brussels, to consult on the present dangers and necessities of the state. When the President Viglius had laid before them the matters on which they were summoned to deliberate, three days were given to them for consideration. During this time, the Prince of Orange assembled them in his palace, where he represented to them the necessity of coming to some unanimous resolution before the next sitting, and of agreeing on the measures which ought to be followed in the present dangerous state of affairs.

The majority assented to the propriety of this course, only Barlaimont, with a few of the dependents of the Cardinal, had the courage to plead for the interests of the crown and of the minister. "It did not behove them," he said, "to interfere in the concerns of the government, and this previous agreement of votes was an illegal and culpable assumption, in the guilt of which he would not participate;"—a declaration which broke up the meeting without any conclusion being come to. The regent, apprised of it by the Count Barlaimont, artfully contrived to keep the knights so well employed during their stay in the town, that they could find no time for coming to any further secret understanding; in this session, however, it was arranged, with their concurrence, that Florence of Montmorency, Lord of Montigny, should make a journey to Spain, in order to acquaint the king with the present posture of affairs. But the regent sent before him another messenger to Madrid, who previously informed the king of all that had been debated between the Prince of Orange and the knights, at the secret conference.

The Flemish ambassador was flattered in Madrid with empty protestations of the king's favour and paternal sentiments towards the Netherlands; while the regent was commanded to thwart, to the utmost of her power, the secret combinations of the nobility, and if possible, to sow discord among their most eminent members. Jealousy, private interest, and religious differences, had long divided many of the nobles; their share in the common neglect and contempt with which they were treated, and a general hatred of the minister had again united them. So long as Count Egmont and the Prince of Orange were suitors for the regency, it could not fail, but that at times their competing claims should have brought them into collision. Both had met each other on the road to glory, and before the throne; both, again, met in the Republic, where they strove for the same prize, the favour of their fellow citizens. Such opposite characters soon became estranged, but the powerful sympathy of necessity as quickly reconciled them. Each was now indispensable to the other, and the emergency united these two men together with a bond which their hearts would never have furnished. But it was on this very uncongeniality of disposition that the regent based her plans; if she could fortunately succeed in separating them, she would, at the same time, divide the whole Flemish nobility into two parties. Through the presents and small attentions, by which she exclusively honoured these two, she also sought to excite against them the envy and distrust of the rest, and by appearing to give Count Egmont a preference over the Prince of Orange, she hoped to make the latter suspicious of Egmont's good faith. It happened that at this very time she was obliged to send an extraordinary ambassador to Frankfort, to be present at the election of a Roman Emperor; she chose for this office the Duke of Arschot, the avowed enemy of the prince, in order, in some degree, to show in his case how splendid was the reward which hatred against the latter might look for.

The Orange faction, however, instead of suffering any diminution, had gained an important accession in Count Horn, who, as admiral of the Flemish marine, had convoyed the king to Biscay, and now again took his seat in the Council of State. Horn's restless and republican spirit readily me the daring schemes of Orange and Egmont, and a dangerous Triumvirate was soon formed by these three friends, which shook the royal power in the Netherlands, but which terminated very differently for each of its members.

(1562.) Meanwhile, Montigny had returned from his embassy, and brought back to the Council of State the most gracious assurance of the monarch. But the Prince of Orange had, through his own secret channels of intelligence, received more credible information from Madrid, which entirely contradicted this report. By these means, he learnt all the ill services which Granvella had done him and his friends with the king, and the odious appellations which were there applied to the Flemish nobility. There was no help for them so long as the minister retained the helm of government, and to procure his dismissal was the scheme, however rash and adventurous it appeared, which wholly occupied the mind of the Prince. It was agreed between him and Counts Horn and Egmont, to despatch a joint letter to the king, and, in the name of the whole nobility, formally to accuse the minister, and press energetically for his removal. The Duke of Arschot, to whom this proposition was communicated by Count Egmont, refused to concur in it, haughtily declaring that he was not disposed to receive laws from Egmont and Orange; that he had no cause of complaint against Granvella, and that he thought it very presumptuous to prescribe to the king what ministers he ought to employ. Orange received a similar answer from the Count of Aremberg. Either the seeds of distrust, which the regent had scattered amongst the nobility, had already taken root, or the fear of the minister's power outweighed the abhorrence of his measures; at any rate, the whole nobility shrunk back timidly and irresolutely from the proposal. This disappointment did not, however, discourage them, the letter was written and subscribed by all three (1563).

In it, Granvella was represented as the prime cause of all the disorders in the Netherlands. So long as the highest power should be entrusted to him, it would, they declared, be impossible for them to serve the nation and the king effectually; on the other hand, all would revert to its former tranquillity, all opposition be discontinued, and the government regain the affections of the people, as soon as his majesty should be pleased to remove this man from the helm of the state. In that case, they added, neither exertion nor zeal would be wanting on their part to maintain in these countries the dignity of the king and the purity of the faith, which was no less sacred to them, than to the Cardinal Granvella.

Secretly as this letter was prepared, still the duchess was informed of it in sufficient time, to anticipate it by another despatch, and to counteract the effect which it might have had on the king's mind. Some months passed ere an answer came from Madrid. It was mild, but vague. "The king," such was its import, "was not used to condemn his ministers unheard, on the mere accusations of their enemies. Common justice alone required that the accusers of the cardinal should descend from general imputations to special proofs, and if they were not inclined to do this in writing, one of them might come to Spain, where he should be treated with all respect. Besides this letter, which was equally directed to all three, Count Egmont farther received an autograph letter from the king, wherein his majesty expressed a wish to learn from him in particular, what in the common letter had been only generally touched upon. The regent, also, was specially instructed how she was to answer the three collectively, and the count singly. The king knew his man. He felt it was easy to manage Count Egmont alone; for this reason he sought to entice him to Madrid, where he would be removed from the commanding guidance of a higher intellect. In distinguishing him above his two friends by so flattering a mark of his confidence, he made a difference in the relation in which they severally stood to the throne; how could they, then, unite with equal zeal for the same object, when the inducements were no longer the same? This time, indeed, the vigilance of Orange frustrated the scheme; but the sequel of the history will show that the seed which was now scattered, was not altogether lost.

(1563.) The king's answer gave no satisfaction to the three confederates; they boldly determined to venture a second attempt. "It had," they wrote, "surprised them not a little, that his majesty had thought their representations so unworthy of attention. It was not as accusers of the minister, but as counsellors of his majesty, whose duty it was to inform their master of the condition of his states, that they had despatched that letter to him. They sought not the ruin of the minister, indeed it would gratify them to see him contented and happy in any other part of the world, than here in the Netherlands. They were, however, fully persuaded of this, that his continued presence there was absolutely incompatible with the general tranquillity. The present dangerous condition of their native country would allow none of them to leave it, much less to take so long a journey as to Spain on Granvella's account. If, therefore, his majesty did not please to comply with their written request, they hoped to be excused for the future from attendance in the senate, where they were only exposed to the mortification of meeting the minister, and where they could be of no service, either to the king or the state, but only appeared contemptible in their own sight. In conclusion, they begged his majesty would not take ill the plain simplicity of their language, since persons of their character set more value on acting well, than on speaking finely." To the same purport was a separate letter from Count Egmont, in which he returned thanks for the royal autograph. This second address was followed by an answer to the effect that, " their representations should be taken into consideration, meanwhile they were requested to attend the council of state as heretofore."

It was evident that the monarch was far from intending to grant their request; they, therefore, from this time forth, absented themselves from the state council, and even left Brussels. Not having succeeded in removing the minister by lawful means, they sought to accomplish this end by a new mode, from which more might be expected. On every occasion, they and their adherents openly showed the contempt which they felt for him, and contrived to throw ridicule on everything he undertook. By this contemptuous treatment, they hoped to harass the haughty spirit of the priest, and to obtain through his mortified self-love, what they had failed in by other means. In this, indeed, they did not succeed; but the expedient on which they had fallen, led, in the end, to the ruin of the minister.

The popular voice was raised more loudly against him, so soon as it was perceived that he had forfeited the good opinion of the nobles, and that men, whose sentiments they had been used blindly to echo, preceded them in detestation of him. The contemptuous manner in which the nobility now treated him, devoted him in a measure to the general scorn, and emboldened calumny, which never spares even what is holiest and purest, to lay its sacrilegious hand on his honour. The new constitution of the church, which was the great grievance of the nation, had been the basis of his fortunes—this was a crime that could not be forgiven. Every fresh execution, and with such spectacles the activity of the inquisitors was only too liberal, kept alive and furnished dreadful exercise to the bitter animosity against him, and at last, custom and usage inscribed his name on every act of oppression. A stranger in a land, into which he had been introduced against its will; alone among millions of enemies; uncertain of all his tools; supported only by the weak arm of distant royalty; maintaining his intercourse with the nation, which he had to gain, only by means of faithless instruments, all of whom made it their highest object to falsify his actions and misrepresent his motives: lastly, with a woman for his coadjutor, who could not share with him the burden of the general execration—thus he stood exposed to the wantonness, the ingratitude, the faction, the envy, and all the evil passions of a licentious, insubordinate people. It is worthy of remark, that the hatred which he had incurred, far outran the demerits which could be laid to his charge; that it was difficult, nay impossible, for his accusers to substantiate, by proof, the general condemnation, which fell upon him from all sides. Before and after him, fanaticism dragged its victims to the altar, before and after him civil blood flowed, the rights of men were made a mock of, and men themselves rendered wretched. Under Charles V. tyranny ought to have pained more acutely through its novelty—under the Duke of Alva it was carried to far more unnatural lengths, in so much that Granvella's administration, in comparison with that of his successor, was even merciful; and yet we do not find that his contemporaries ever evinced the same degree of personal exasperation and spite against the latter, in which they indulged against his predecessor. To cloak the meanness of his birth in the splendour of high dignities, and by an exalted station to place him, if possible, above the malice of his enemies, the regent had made interest at Rome to procure for him the cardinal's hat; but this very honour, which connected him more closely with the Papal court, made him so much the more an alien in the provinces. The purple was a new crime in Brussels, and an obnoxious detested garb, which, in a measure, publicly held forth to view the principles on which his future conduct would be governed. Neither his honourable rank, which alone often consecrates the most infamous caitiff, nor his talents which commanded esteem, nor even his terrible omnipotence, which daily revealed itself in so many bloody manifestations, could screen him from derision. Terror and scorn, the fearful and the ludicrous were, in his instance, unnaturally blended*. Odious rumours branded his honour; murderous attempts on the lives of Egmont and Orange were ascribed to him; the most incredible things found credence; the most monstrous, if they referred to him, or were said to emanate from him, surprised no longer The nation had already become uncivilized to that degree, where the most contradictory sentiments prevail side by side, and the finer boundary lines of decorum and moral feeling are erased. This belief in extraordinary crimes is almost invariably their immediate precursor

But, with this gloomy prospect, the strange destiny of this man opens at the same time a grander view, which impresses the unprejudiced observer with pleasure and admiration. Here, he beholds a nation dazzled by no splendour, and restrained by no fear, firmly, inexorably, and unpremeditatedly unanimous in punishing the crime, which had been committed against its dignity, by the violent introduction of a stranger into the heart of its political constitution. We see him ever aloof, and ever isolated, like a foreign hostile body, hovering over a surface which repels its contact. The strong hand itself of the monarch, who was his friend and protector, could not support him against the antipathies of the nation, which had once resolved to withhold from him all its sympathy. The voice of national hatred was all-powerful, and was ready to forego even private interest, its certain gains; his alms even were shunned, like the fruits of an accursed tree. Like pestilential vapour, the infamy of universal reprobation hung over him. In his case, gratitude believed itself absolved from its duties; his adherents shunned him; his friends were dumb in his behalf. So terribly did the people avenge the insulted majesty of their nobles and their nation on the greatest monarch of the earth.

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* The nobility, at the suggestion of Count Egmont, caused their servants to wear a common livery, on which was embroidered a fool's cap. All Brussels interpreted it for the cardinal's hat, and every appearance of such a servant renewed their laughter; this badge of a fool's cap, which was offensive to the court, was subsequently changed into a bundle of arrows—an accidental jest which took a very serious end, and probably was the origin of the arms of the republic. Vit. Vigl. T. II. 35 Thuan. 489. The respect for the cardinal sunk at last so low, that a caricature was publicly placed in his own hand, in which he was represented seated on a heap of eggs, out of which bishops were crawling. Over him hovered a devil with the inscription—" This is my son, hear ye him!"

History has repeated this memorable example only once, in Cardinal Mazarin; but the instance differed according to the spirit of the two periods and nations. The highest power could not protect either from derision; but if France found vent for its indignation in laughing at its pantaloon, the Netherlands hurried from scorn to rebellion. The former after a long bondage under the vigorous administration of Richlieu, saw itself placed suddenly in unwonted liberty: the latter had passed from ancient hereditary freedom into strange and unusual servitude; it was as natural, that the Fronde should end again in subjection, as that the Belgian troubles should issue in republican independence. The revolt of the Parisians was the offspring of poverty: unbridled, but not bold, arrogant, but without energy, base and plebeian, like the source from which it sprang. The murmur of the Netherlands was the proud and powerful voice of wealth. Licentiousness and hunger inspired the former; revenge, life, property, and religion were the animating motives of the latter. Rapacity was Mazarin's spring of action; Granvella's, lust of power. The former was humane and mild; the latter harsh, imperious, cruel. The French minister sought in the favour of his queen, an asylum from the hatred of the magnates and the fury of the people; the Netherlandish minister provoked the hatred of a whole nation in order to please one man. Against Mazarin were only a few factions, and the mob they could arm; an entire and united nation, against Granvella. Under the former, parliament attempted to obtain, by stealth, a power which did not belong to them; under the latter, it struggled for a lawful authority which he insidiously had endeavoured to wrest from them. The former had to contend with the princes of the blood and the peers of the realm, as the latter had with the native nobility and the states, but in stead of eadeavouring, like the former, to overthrow the common enemy, in the hope of stepping themselves into his place, the latter wished to destroy the place itself, and to divide a power which no single man ought to possess entire.

While these feelings were spreading among the people, the influence of the minister at the court of the regent began to totter. The repeated complaints against the extent of his power, must at last have made her sensible how little faith was placed in her own; perhaps, too, she began to fear that the universal abhorrence, which attached to him, would soon include herself also, or that his longer stay would inevitably provoke the menaced revolt. Long intercourse with him, his instruction and example, had qualified her to govern without him. His dignity began to be more oppressive to her as he became less necessary, and his faults, to which her friendship had hitherto lent a veil, became visible as it was withdrawn. She was now as much disposed to search out and enumerate these faults, as she formerly had been to conceal them In this unfavourable state of her feelings towards the cardinal, the urgent and accumulated representations of the nobles began, at last, to find access to her mind, and the more easily, as they contrived to mix up her own fears with their own "It was matter of great astonishment," said Count Egmont to her, "that to gratify a man who was not even a Fleming, and of whom, therefore, it must be well known that his happiness could not be dependent on the prosperity of this country, the king could be content to see all his Netherlandish subjects suffer, and this to please a foreigner, who if his birth made him a subject of the Emperor, the purple had made a creature of the court of Rome." "To the king alone," added the count, "was Granvella indebted for his being still among the living; for the future, however, he would leave that care of him to the regent, and he hereby gave her warning." As the majority of the nobles, disgusted with the contemptuous treatment which they met with in the Council of State, gradually withdrew from it, the arbitrary proceedings of the minister lost the last semblance of republican deliberation which had hitherto softened the odious aspect, and the empty desolation of the council chamber made his domineering rule appear in all its obnoxiousness. The regent now felt that she had a master over her, and from that moment the banishment of the minister was decided upon.

With this object, she despatched her private secretary, Thomas Armenteros, to Spain, to acquaint the king with the circumstances in which the cardinal was placed, to apprise him of the intimations she had received of the intentions of the nobles, and in this manner, to cause the resolution for his recall to appear to emanate from the king himself. What she did not like to trust to a letter, Armenteros was ordered ingeniously to interweave in the oral communication, which the king would probably require from him. Armenteros fulfilled his commission with all the ability of a consummate courtier; but an audience of four hours, could not overthrow the work of many years, nor destroy in Philip's mind his opinion of his minister, which was there unalterably established. Long did the monarch hold counsel with his policy and his interest, until Granvella himself came to the aid of his wavering resolution, and voluntarily solicited a dismissal, which, he feared, could not much longer be deferred. What the detestation of all the Netherlands could not effect, the contemptuous treatment of the nobility accomplished; he was, at last, weary of a power which was no longer feared, and exposed him less to envy than to infamy.

Perhaps, as some have believed, he trembled for his life, which was certainly in more than imaginary danger; perhaps he wished to receive his dismissal from the king, under the shape of a boon rather than of a sentence, and after the example of the Romans, meet with dignity a fate, which he could no longer avoid. Philip too, it would appear, preferred generously to accord to the nation a request, rather than to yield at a later period to a demand, and hoped at least to merit their thanks, by voluntarily conceding now what necessity would ere long extort. His fears prevailed over his obstinacy, and prudence overcame pride.

Granvella doubted not for a moment what the decision of the king would be. A few days after the return of Armenteros he saw humility and flattery disappear from the few faces which had, till then, servilely smiled upon him;

the last small crowd of base flatterers and eye servants vanished from around his person; his threshold was forsaken; he perceived that the fructifying warmth of royal favour had left him.

Detraction, which had assailed him during his whole administration, did not spare him even in the moment of resignation. People did not scruple to assert that a short time before he laid down his office, he had expressed a wish to be reconciled to the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont, and even offered, if their forgiveness could be hoped for on no other terms, to ask pardon of them on his knees. It was base and contemptible to sully the memory of a great and extraordinary man with such a charge, but it is still more so, to hand it down uncontradicted to posterity. Granvella submitted to the royal command with a dignified composure. Already had he written, a few months previously, to the Duke of Alva in Spain, to prepare him a place of refuge in Madrid, in case of his having to quit the Netherlands. The latter long bethought himself whether it was advisable to bring thither so dangerous a rival for the favour of his king, or to deny so important a friend such a valuable means of indulging his old hatred of the Flemish nobles. Revenge prevailed over fear, and he strenuously supported Granvella's request with the monarch. But his intercession was fruitless. Armenteros had persuaded the king that the minister's residence in Madrid would only revive, with increased violence, all the complaints of the Belgian nation, to which his ministry had been sacrificed; for then, he said, he would be suspected of poisoning the very source of that power, whose outlets only he had hitherto been charged with corrupting. He therefore sent him to Burgundy, his native place, for which a decent pretext fortunately presented itself. The cardinal gave to his departure from Brussels the appearance of an unimportant journey, from which he would return in a few days. At the same time, however, all the state counsellors, who, under his administration, had voluntarily excluded themselves from its sittings, received a command from the court to resume their seats in the senate at Brussels. Although the latter circumstance made his return not very credible, nevertheless the remotest possibility of it sobered the triumph which celebrated his departure. The regent herself appears to have been undecided what to think about the report; for, in a fresh letter to the king, she repeated all the representations and arguments which ought to restrain him from restoring this minister. Granvella himself, in his correspondence with Barlaimont and Viglius, endeavoured to keep alive this rumour, and at least to alarm with fears, however unsubstantial, the enemies whom he could no longer punish by his presence. Indeed, the dread of the influence of this extraordinary man was so exceedingly great, that, to appease it, he was at last driven even from his home and his country.

After the death of Pius IV., Granvella went to Rome, to be present at the election of a new pope, and at the same time to discharge some commissions of his master, whose confidence in him remained unshaken. Soon after, Philip made him viceroy of Naples, where he succumbed to the seductions of the climate, and the spirit which no vicissitudes could bend voluptuousness overcame. He was sixty-two years old, when the king allowed him to revisit Spain, where he continued with unlimited powers to administer the affairs of Italy. A gloomy old age, and the self-satisfied pride of a sexagenarian administration made him a harsh and rigid judge of the opinions of others, a slave of custom, and a tedious panegyrist of past times. But the policy of the closing century had ceased to be the policy of the opening one. A new and younger ministry were soon weary of so imperious a superintendent, and Philip himself began to shun the aged counsellor, who found nothing worthy of praise but the deeds of his father. Nevertheless, when the conquest of Portugal called Philip to Lisbon, he confided to the cardinal the care of his Spanish territories. Finally, on an Italian tour, in the town of Mantua, in the seventy-third year of his life, Granvella terminated his long existence in the full enjoyment of his glory, and after possessing for forty years the uninterrupted confidence of his king.

THE COUNCIL OF STATE

(1564.) Immediately upon the departure of the minister, all the happy results which were promised from his with drawal were fulfilled. The disaffected nobles resumed their seats in the council, and again devoted themselves to the affairs of the state with redoubled zeal, in order to give no room for regret for him, whom they had driven away, and to prove, by the fortunate administration of the state, that his services were not indispensable. The crowd round the duchess was great. All vied with one another in readiness, in submisson, and zeal in her service; the hours of night were not allowed to stop the transaction of pressing business of state: the greatest unanimity existed between the three councils, the best understanding between the court and the states. From the obliging temper of the Flemish nobility. everything was to be had, as soon as their pride and self-will was flattered by confidence and obliging treatment. The regent took advantage of the first joy of the nation, to beguile them into a vote of certain taxes, which, under the preceding administration, she could not have hoped to extort. In this, the great credit of the nobility effectually supported her, and she soon learned from this nation the secret, which had been so often verified in the German diet: that much must be demanded, in order to get a little.

With pleasure did the regent see herself emancipated from her long thraldom; the emulous industry of the nobility lightened for her the burden of business, and their insinuating humility allowed her to feel the full sweetness of power.

(1564.) Granvella had been overthrown, but his party still remained. His policy lived in his creatures, whom he left behind him in the Privy Council and in the Chamber of Finance. Hatred still smouldered amongst the factious, long after the leader was banished, and the names of the Orange and Royalist parties, of the Patriots and Cardinalists, still continued to divide the senate, and to keep up the flames of discord. Viglius Van Zuichem Van Aytta, President of the Privy Council, State Counsellor and Keeper of the Seal, was now looked upon as the most important person in the senate, and the most powerful prop of the crown and the tiara. This highly meritorious old man, whom we have to thank for some valuable contributions towards the history of the rebellion of the Low Countries, and whose confidential correspondence with his friends has generally been the guide of our narrative, was one of the greatest lawyers of his time, as well as a theologian and priest, and had already, under the Emperor, filled the most important offices. Familiar intercourse with the learned men who adorned the age, and at the head of whom stood Erasmus of Rotterdam, combined with frequent travels in the Imperial service, had extended the sphere of his information and experience, and in many points raised him in his principles and opinions above his contemporaries. The fame of his erudition filled the whole century in which he lived, and has handed his name down to posterity. When, in the year 1548, the connexion of the Netherlands with the German empire was to be settled at the Diet of Augsburg, Charles V. sent hither this statesman to manage the interests of the provinces; and his ability principally succeeded in turning the negociations to the advantage of the Netherlands. After the death of the Emperor, Viglius was one of the many eminent ministers, bequeathed to Philip by his father, and one of the few in whom he honoured his memory. The fortune of the minister Granvella, with whom he was united by the ties of an early acquaintance, raised him likewise to greatness; but he did not share the fall of his patron, because he had not participated in his lust of power, nor, consequently, the hatred which attached to him. A residence of twenty years in the provinces, where the most important affairs were entrusted to him, approved loyalty to his king, and zealous attachment to the Roman Catholic tenets, made him one of the most distinguished instruments of royalty in the Netherlands.

Viglius was a man of learning, but no thinker; an experienced statesman, but without an enlightened mind; of an intellect not sufficiently powerful to break, like his friend Erasmus, the fetters of error, yet not sufficiently bad to employ it, like his predecessor, Granvella, in the service of his own passions. Too weak and timid to follow boldly the guidance of his reason, he preferred trusting to the more convenient path of conscience; a thing was just, so soon as as it became his duty; he belonged to those honest men, who are indispensable to bad ones; fraud reckoned on his honesty. Half a century later, he would have received his immortality from the freedom which he now helped to subvert In the Privy Council at Brussels, he was the servant of tyranny; in the Parliament in London, or in the Senate at Amsterdam he would have died, perhaps, like Thomas More or Olden Barneveldt.

In Count Barlaimont, the President of the Council of Finance, the opposition had a no less formidable antagonist than in Viglius. Historians have transmitted but little information regarding the services and the opinions of this man. In the first part of his career, the dazzling greatness of the Cardinal Granvella seems to have cast a shade over him; after the latter had disappeared from the stage, the superiority of the opposite party kept him down, but still the little that we do find respecting him, throws a favourable light over his character. More than once, the Prince of Orange exerted himself to detach him from the interests of the cardinal, and to join him to his own party—sufficient proof that he placed a value on the prize. All his efforts failed, which shows that he had to do with no vacillating character. More than once, we see him alone, of all the members of the council, stepping forward to oppose the dominant faction, and protecting against universal opposition the interests of the crown, which were in momentary peril of being sacrificed. When the Prince of Orange had assembled the knights of the Golden Fleece in his own palace, with a view to induce them to come to a preparatory resolution for the abolition of the Inquisition, Barlaimont was the first to denounce the illegality of this proceeding, and to inform the regent of it. Some time after, the prince asked him if the regent knew of that assembly, and Barlaimont hesitated not a moment to avow to him the truth. All the steps which have been ascribed to him bespeak a man, whom neither influence nor fear could tempt, —who, with a firm courage and indomitable constancy, remained faithful to the party which he had once chosen, but who, it must at the same time be confessed, entertained too proud and too despotic notions. to have selected any other

Amongst the adherents of the royal party at Brussels, we have further, the names of the Duke of Arschot, the Counts of Mansfeld, Megen, and Aremberg—all three native Netherlanders; and therefore, as it appeared, bound equally with the whole Netherlandish nobility, to oppose the hierarchy and the royal power in their native country. So much the more surprised must we feel at their contrary behaviour, and which is indeed the more remarkable, since we find them on terms of friendship with the most eminent members of the faction, and anything but insensible to the common grievances of their country.

But they had not self-confidence, or heroism enough to venture on an unequal contest with so superior an antagonist. With a cowardly prudence they made their just discontent submit to the stern law of necessity, and imposed a hard sacrifice on their pride, because their pampered vanity was capable of nothing better. Too thrifty and too discreet, to wish to extort from the justice or the fear of their sovereign the certain good which they already possessed from his voluntary generosity, or to resign a real happiness, in order to preserve the shadow of another, they rather employed the propitious moment, to drive a traffic with their constancy, which, from the general defection of the nobility, had now risen in value. Caring little for true glory, they allowed their ambition to decide which party they should take; for the ambition of base minds prefers to bow beneath the hard yoke of compulsion, rather than submit to the gentle sway of a superior intellect. Small would have been the value of the favour conferred, had they bestowed themselves on the Prince of Orange; but their connexion with royalty made them so much the more formidable as opponents. There their names would have been lost among his numerous adherents, and in the splendour of their rival; on the almost deserted side of the court their insignificant merit acquired lustre.

The families of Nassau and Croi, (to the latter belonged the Duke of Arschot,) had for several reigns been competitors for influence and honour, and their rivalry had kept up an old feud between their families, which religious differences finally made irreconcileable. The house of Croi, from time immemorial, had been renowned for its devout and strict observance of papistic rites and ceremonies; the Counts of Nassau had gone over to the new sect—sufficient reasons why Philip of Croi, Duke of Arschot, should prefer a party, which placed him the most decidedly in opposition to the Prince of Orange. The court did not fail to take advantage of this private feud, and to oppose so important an enemy to the increasing influence of the house of Nassau in the republic.

The Counts Mansfeld and Megen had, till lately, been the confidential friends of Count Egmont. In common with him, they had raised their voice against the minister; had joined him in resisting the Inquisition and the edicts, and had hitherto held with him as far as honour and duty would permit. But at these limits the three friends now separated Egmont's unsuspecting virtue incessantly hurried him forwards on the road to ruin; Mansfeld and Megen, admonished of the danger, began in good time to think of a safe retreat. There still exist letters, which were interchanged between the Counts Egmont and Mansfeld, and which, although written at a later period, give us a true picture of their former friendship. "If," replied Count Mansfeld to his friend, who in an amicable manner had reproved him for his defection to the king, "if formerly I was of opinion, that the general good made the abolition of the Inquisition, the mitigation of the edicts, and the removal of the Cardinal Granvella necessary, the king has now acquiesced in this wish, and removed the cause of complaint. We have already done too much against the majesty of the sovereign, and the authority of the church; it is high time for us to turn, if we would wish to meet the king, when he comes, with open brow, and without anxiety. As regards my own person, I do not dread his vengeance; with confident courage I would, at his first summons, present myself in Spain, and boldly abide my sentence from his justice and goodness. I do not say this, as if I doubted whether Count Egmont can assert the same, but he will act prudently, in looking more to his own safety, and in removing suspicion from his actions." "If I hear," he says in conclusion, "that he has allowed my admonitions to have their due weight, our friendship continues; if not, I feel myself in that case strong enough, to sacrifice all human ties to my duty and to honour."

The enlarged power of the nobility, exposed the Republic to almost a greater evil, than that which it had just escaped by the removal of the minister. Impoverished by long habits of luxury, which at the same time had relaxed their morals, and to which they were now too much addicted, to be able to renounce them, they yielded to the perilous opportunity of indulging their ruling inclination, and of again repairing the expiring lustre of their fortunes. Extravagance brought on the thirst for gain, and this introduced bribery. Secular and ecclesiastical offices were publicly put up to sale; posts of honour, privileges, and patents, were sold to the highest bidder; even justice was made a trade. Whom the Privy Council had condemned, was acquitted by the Council of State; and what the former refused to grant, was to be purchased from the latter. The Council of State, indeed, subsequently retorted the charge on the two other councils; but it forgot that it was its own example that corrupted them. The shrewdness of rapacity opened new sources of gain. Life, liberty, and religion were insured for a certain sum, like landed estates; for gold, murderers and malefactors were free, and the nation was plundered by a lottery. The servants and creatures of the state, counsellors and governors of provinces were, without regard to rank or merit, pushed into the most important posts; whoever had a petition to present at court, had to make his way through the governors of provinces and their inferior servants. No artifice of seduction was spared to implicate in these excesses the private secretary of the duchess, Thomas Armenteros, a man up to this time of irreproachable character. By pretended professions of attachment and friendship, a successful attempt was made to gain his confidence, and by luxurious entertainments to undermine his principles; the seductive example infected his morals, and new wants overcame his hitherto incorruptible integrity. He was now blind to abuses in which he was an accomplice, and drew a veil over the crimes of others, in order at the same time to cloak his own. With his knowledge the royal exchequer was robbed, and the objects of the government were defeated through a corrupt administration of its revenues. Meanwhile, the regent wandered on in a fond dream of power and activity, which the flattery of the nobles artfully knew how to foster. The ambition of the factious played with the foibles of a woman, and with empty signs and an humble show of submission purchased real power from her. She soon belonged entirely to the faction, and had imperceptibly changed her principles. Diametrically opposing all her former proceedings, even in direct violation of her duty, she now brought before the Council of State, which was swayed by the faction, not only questions which belonged to the other councils, but also the suggestions which Viglius had made to her in private, in the same way as formerly, under Granvella's administration, she had improperly neglected to consult it at all. Nearly all business and all influence were now diverted to the governors of provinces. All petitions were directed to them, by them all lucrative appointments were bestowed. Their usurpations were indeed carried so far, that law proceedings were withdrawn from the municipal authorities of the towns, and brought before their own tribunals. The respectability of the provincial courts decreased, as theirs extended, and with the respectability of the municipal functionaries the administration of justice and civil order declined. The smaller courts soon followed the example of the government of the country. The spirit which ruled the council of state at Brussels, soon diffused itself through the provinces. Bribery, indulgences, robbery, venality of justice, were universal in the courts of judicature of the country; morals degenerated, and the new sects availed themselves of this all-pervading licentiousness to propagate their opinions. The religious indifference or toleration of the nobles, who, either themselves inclined to the side of the innovators, or, at least, detested the Inquisition as an instrument of despotism, had mitigated the rigour of the religious edicts; and through the letters of indemnity, which were bestowed on many Protestants, the holy office was deprived of its best victims. In no way could the nobility more agreeably announce to the nation its present share in the government of the country, than by sacrificing to it the hated tribunal of the Inquisition—and to this, inclination impelled them still more than the dictates of policy. The nation passed, in a moment, from the most oppressive constraint of intolerance into a state of freedom, to which, however, it had already become too unaccustomed, to support it with moderation. The inquisitors, deprived of the support of the municipal authorities, found themselves an object of derision rather than of fear. In Bruges, the town council caused even some of their own servants to be placed in confinement, and kept on bread and water, for attempting to lay hands upon a supposed heretic. About this very time, the mob in Antwerp, having made a futile attempt to rescue a person charged with heresy from the holy office, there was placarded in the public market-place an inscription, written in blood, to the effect that a number of persons had bound themselves by oath to avenge the death of that innocent person.

From the corruption which pervaded the whole Council of State, the Privy Council and the Chamber of Finance, in which Viglius and Barlaimont were presidents, had, as yet, for the most part kept themselves pure

As the faction could not succeed in insinuating their adherents into those two councils, the only course open to them, was, if possible, to render both inefficient, and to transfer their business to the Council of State. To carry out this design, the Prince of Orange sought to secure the co-operation of the other state counsellors. "They were called, indeed, senators," he frequently declared to his adherents, "but others possessed the power. If gold was wanted, to pay the troops; or when the question was, how the spreading heresy was to be repressed, or the people kept in order, then they were consulted; although in fact they were the guardians, neither of the treasury, nor of the laws, but only the organs, through which the other two councils operated on the state. And yet, alone, they were equal to the whole administration of the country, which had been uselessly portioned out amongst three separate chambers. If they would among themselves only agree to reunite to the Council of State these two important branches of government, which had been dissevered from it, one soul might animate the whole body." A plan was preliminarily and secretly agreed on, in accordance with which twelve new Knights of the Fleece were to be added to the Council of State, the administration of justice restored to the tribunal at Malines, to which it originally belonged, the granting of letters of grace, patents, and so forth assigned to the president Viglius, while the management of the finances should be committed to it. All the difficulties, indeed, which the distrust of the court, and its jealousy of the increasing power of the nobility would oppose to this innovation, were foreseen and provided against. In order to constrain the regent's assent, some of the principal officers of the army were put forward as a cloak, who were to annoy the court at Brussels with boisterous demands for their arrears of pay, and in case of refusal to threaten a rebellion. It was also contrived to have the regent assailed with numerous petitions and memorials, complaining of the delays of justice, and exaggerating the danger, which was to be apprehended from the daily growth of heresy. Nothing was omitted to darken the picture of the disorganized state of society, of the abuse of justice, and of the deficiency in the finances, which was made so alarming that she awoke with terror from the delusion of prosperity in which she had hitherto cradled herself. She called the three councils together, to consult them on the means by which these disorders were to be remedied. The majority was in favour of sending an extraordinary ambassador to Spain, who, by a circumstantial and vivid delineation should make the king acquainted with the true position of affairs, and if possible prevail on him to adopt efficient measures of reform. This proposition was opposed by Viglius, who, however, had not the slightest suspicion of the secret designs of the faction. "The evil complained of," he said, "is undoubtedly great, and one which can no longer be neglected with impunity, but it is not irremediable by ourselves. The administration of justice is certainly crippled, but the blame of this lies with the nobles themselves; by their contemptuous treatment they have thrown discredit on the municipal authorities, who, moreover, are very inadequately supported by the governors of provinces. If heresy is on the increase, it is because the secular arm has deserted the spiritual judges, and because the lower orders, following the example of the nobles, have thrown off all respect for those in authority. The provinces are undoubtedly oppressed by a heavy debt, but it has not been accumulated, as alleged, by any malversation of the revenues, but by the expenses of former wars and the king's present exigences; still, wise and prudent measures of finance might, in a short time, remove the burden. If the Council of State would not be so profuse of its indulgences, its charters of immunity, and its exemptions; if it would commence the reformation of morals with itself, show greater respect to the laws, and do what lies in its power to restore to the municipal functionaries their former consideration; in short, if the councils and the governors of provinces would only fulfil their own duties, the present grounds of complaint would soon be removed. Why, then, send an ambassador to Spain, when as yet nothing has occurred to justify so extraordinary an expedient? If, however, the council thinks otherwise, he would not oppose the general voice; only he must make it a condition of his concurrence, that the principal instruction of the envoy should be, to intreat the king to make them a speedy visit."

There was but one voice as to the choice of an envoy. Of all the Flemish nobles, Count Egmont was the only one whose appointment would give equal satisfaction to both parties. His hatred of the Inquisition, his patriotic and liberal sentiments, and the unblemished integrity of his character, gave to the republic sufficient surety for his conduct, while, for the reasons already mentioned, he could not fail to be welcome to the king. Moreover, Egmont's personal figure and demeanour were calculated, on his first appearance, to make that favourable impression which goes so far towards winning the hearts of princes; and his engaging carriage would come to the aid of his eloquence, and enforce his petition with those persuasive arts, which are indispensable to the success of even the most trifling suits to royalty. Egmont himself, too, wished for the embassy, as it would afford him the opportunity of adjusting, personally, matters with his sovereign.

About this time, the Council, or rather Synod, of Trent closed its sittings, and published its decrees to the whole of Christendom. But these canons, far from accomplishing the object for which the Synod was originally convened, and satisfying the expectation of religious parties, had rather widened the breach between them, and made the schism irremediable and eternal.

The labours of the Synod, instead of purifying the Romish Church from its corruptions, had only reduced the latter to greater definiteness and precision, and invested them with the sanction of authority. All the subtilties of its teaching, all the arts and usurpations of the Roman See, which had hitherto rested more on arbitrary usage, were now passed into laws, and raised into a system. The uses and abuses which, during the barbarous times of ignorance and superstition, had crept into Christianity, were now declared essential parts of its worship, and anathemas were denounced upon all who should dare to contradict the dogmas, or neglect the observances of the Romish Communion. All were anathematised who should either presume to doubt the miraculous power of relics, and refuse to honour the bones of martyrs, or should be so bold as to doubt the availing efficacy of the intercession of saints. The power of granting indulgences the first source of the defection from the See of Rome, was now propounded in an irrefragable article of faith; and the principle of monasticism sanctioned by an express decree of the Synod, which allowed males to take the vows at sixteen, and females at twelve. And while all the opinions of the Protestants were, without exception, condemned, no indulgence was shown to their errors or weaknesses, nor a single step taken to win them back by mildness to the bosom of the mother church. Amongst the Protestants, the wearisome records of the subtle deliberations of the Synod, and the absurdity of its decisions, increased, if possible, the hearty contempt which they had long entertained for Popery, and laid open to their controversialists new and hitherto unnoticed points of attack. It was an ill-judged step to bring the mysteries of the church too close to the glaring torch of reason, and to fight with syllogisms for the tenets of a blind belief.

Moreover, the decrees of the Council of Trent were not satisfactory even to all the powers in communion with Rome. France rejected them entirely, both because she did not wish to displease the Huguenots, and also because she was offended by the supremacy which the Pope arrogated to himself over the Council; some of the Roman Catholic princes of Germany likewise declared against it. Little, however, as Philip II. was pleased with many of its articles, which trenched too closely upon his own rights, for no monarch was ever more jealous of his prerogative; highly as the Pope's assumption of control over the Council, and its arbitrary, precipitate dissolution, had offended him; just as was his indignation at the slight which the Pope had put upon his ambassador; he nevertheless acknowledged the decrees of the Synod, even in its present form, because it favoured his darling object—the extirpation of heresy. Political considerations were all postponed to this one religious object, and he commanded the publication and enforcement of its canons, throughout his dominions.

The spirit of revolt, which was diffused through the Belgian provinces, scarcely required this new stimulus. There the minds of men were in a ferment, and the character of the Romish Church had sunk almost to the lowest point of contempt in the general opinion Under such circumstances, the imperious, and frequently injudicious, decrees of the Council, could not fail of being highly offensive; but Philip II. could not belie his religious character so far as to allow a different religion to a portion of his subjects, even though they might live on a different soil, and under different laws from the rest. The regent was strictly enjoined to exact in the Netherlands the same obedience to the decrees of Trent, which was yielded to them in Spain and Italy.

They met, however, with the warmest opposition in the Council of State at Brussels. "The nation," William of Orange declared, "neither would nor could acknowledge them, since they were, for the most part, opposed to the fundamental principles of their constitution; and, for similar reasons, they had even been rejected by several Roman Catholic princes." The whole council, nearly, was on the side of Orange; a decided majority were for entreating the king either to recall the decrees entirely, or, at least, to publish them under certain limitations. This proposition was resisted by Viglius, who insisted on a strict and literal obedience to the royal commands. "The church," he said, "had in all ages maintained the purity of its doctrines, and the strictness of its discipline, by means of such general councils. No more efficacious remedy could be opposed to the errors of opinion which had so long distracted their country, than these very decrees, the rejection of which is now urged by the Council of State. Even if they are occasionally at variance with the constitutional rights of the citizens, this is an evil which can easily be met by a judicious and temperate application of them. For the rest, it redounds to the honour of our sovereign, the King of Spain, that he alone, of all the princes of his time, refuses to yield his better judgment to necessity, and will not, for any fear of consequences, reject measures which the welfare of the church demands, and which the happiness of his subjects makes a duty."

But the decrees also contained several matters which affected the rights of the crown itself. Occasion was therefore taken of this fact, to propose that these sections, at least, should be omitted from the proclamation. By this means, the king might, it was argued, be relieved from these obnoxious and degrading articles by a happy expedient; the national liberties of the Netherlands might be advanced as the pretext for the omission, and the name of the republic lent to cover this encroachment on the authority of the Synod. But the king had caused the decrees to be received and enforced in his other dominions unconditionally; and it was not to be expected that he would give the other Roman Catholic powers such an example of opposition, and himself undermine the edifice whose foundation he had been so assiduous in laying.

COUNT EGMONT IN SPAIN.

Count Egmont was despatched to Spain, to make a forcible representation to the king on the subject of these decrees; to persuade him, if possible, to adopt a milder policy towards his Protestant subjects, and to propose to him the incorporation of the three councils, was the commission he received from the malcontents. By the regent, he was charged to apprise the monarch of the refractory spirit of the people; to convince him of the impossibility of enforcing these edicts of religion in their full severity; and lastly, to acquaint him with the bad state of the military defences, and the exhausted condition of the exchequer.

The count's public instructions were drawn up by the President Viglius. They contained heavy complaints of the decay of justice, the growth of heresy, and the exhaustion of the treasury. He was also to press urgently a personal visit from the king to the Netherlands. The rest was left to the eloquence of the envoy, who received a hint from the regent, not to let so fair an opportunity escape of establishing himself in the favour of his sovereign.

The terms in which the count's instructions, and the representations which he was to make to the king, were drawn up, appeared to the Prince of Orange far too vague and general. "The president's statement," he said, "of our grievances comes very far short of the truth. How can the king apply the suitable remedies, if we conceal from him the full extent of the evil? Let us not represent the numbers of the heretics inferior to what it is in reality. Let us candidly acknowledge that they swarm in every province, and in every hamlet, however small. Neither let us disguise from him the truth, that they despise the penal statutes, and entertain but little reverence for the government. What good can come of this concealment? Let us rather openly avow to the king, that the republic cannot long continue in its present condition. The Privy Council, indeed, will perhaps pronounce differently, for to them the existing disorders are welcome. For what else is the source of the abuse of justice, and the universal corruption of the courts of law, but its insatiable rapacity? How otherwise can the pomp and scandalous luxury of its members, whom we have seen rise from the dust, be supported, if not by bribery? Do not the people daily complain that no other key but gold can open an access to them; and do not even their quarrels prove how little they are swayed by a care for the common weal? Are they likely to consult the public good, who are the slaves of their private passions? Do they think, forsooth, that we, the governors of the provinces, are with our soldiers to stand ready at the beck and call of an infamous lictor? Let them set bounds to their indulgences and free pardons, which they so lavishly bestow on the very persons to whom we think it just and expedient to deny them. No one can remit the punishment of a crime, without sinning against society, and contributing to the increase of the general evil. To my mind, and I have no hesitation to avow it, the distribution amongst so many councils of the state secrets, and the affairs of government, has always appeared highly objectionable. The Council of State is sufficient for all the duties of the administration; several patriots have already felt this in silence, and I now openly declare it. It is my decided conviction, that the only sufficient remedy for all the evils complained of, is to merge the other two chambers in the Council of State. This is the point which we must endeavour to obtain from the king, or the present embassy, like all others, will be entirely useless and ineffectual." The prince now laid before the assembled senate the plan which we have already described. Viglius, against whom this new proposition was individually and mainly directed, and whose eyes were now suddenly opened, was overcome by the violence of his vexation. The agitation of his feelings was too much for his feeble body, and he was found, on the following morning, paralyzed by apoplexy, and in danger of his life.

His place was supplied by Jaachim Hopper, a member of the Privy Council, at Brussels, a man of old-fashioned morals and unblemished integrity, the president's most trusted and worthiest friend *. To meet the wishes of the Orange party, he made some additions to the instructions of the ambassador, relating chiefly to the abolition of the Inquisition, and the incorporation of the three councils, not so much with the consent of the regent, as in the absence of her prohibition. Upon Count Egmont taking leave of the president, who had recovered from his attack, the latter requested him to procure in Spain, permission to resign his appointment. His day, he declared, was past; like the example of his friend and predecessor Granvella, he wished to retire into the quiet of private life, and to anticipate the uncertainty of fortune His genius warned him of impending storm, by which he could have no desire to be overtaken.

Count Egmont embarked on his journey to Spain, in January, 1565, and was received there with a kindness and respect which none of his rank had ever before experienced. The nobles of Castile, taught by the king's example to conquer their feelings, or rather, true to his policy, seemed to have laid aside their ancient grudge against the Flemish nobility, and vied with one another in winning his heart by their affability. All his private matters were immediately settled to his wishes by the king, nay, even his expectations exceeded; and during the whole period of his stay, he had ample cause to boast of the hospitality of the monarch. The latter assured him in the strongest terms of his love for his Belgian subjects, and held out hopes of his acceding eventually to the general wish, and remitting somewhat of the severity of the religious edicts. At the same time, however, he appointed in Madrid a commission of theologians, to whom he propounded the question: "Is it *necessary*, to grant to the provinces the religious toleration they demand?" As the majority of them were of opinion that the peculiar constitution of the Netherlands, and the fear of a rebellion, might well excuse a degree of forbearance in their case, the question was repeated more pointedly "He did not seek to know, he said, "if he might do so, but if he must?" When the latter question was answered in the negative, he rose from his seat, and kneeling down before a crucifix, prayed in these words: "Almighty Majesty, suffer me not at any time to fall so low as to consent to reign over those who reject thee!" In perfect accordance with the spirit of this prayer, were the measures which he resolved to adopt in the Netherlands. On the article of religion, this monarch had taken his resolution once for ever; urgent necessity might, perhaps, have constrained him temporarily to suspend the execution of the penal statutes, but never, formally, to repeal them entirely, or even to modify them. In vain did Egmont represent to him that the public execution of the heretics daily augmented the number of their followers, while the courage and even joy with which they met their death, filled the spectators with the deepest admiration, and awakened in them high opinions of a doctrine which could make such heroes of its disciples. This representation was not indeed lost upon the king, but it had a very different effect from what it was intended to produce. In order to prevent these seductive scenes, without, however, compromising the severity of the edicts, he fell upon an expedient, and ordered that in future the executions should take place in private. The answer of the king on the subject of the embassy, was given to the count in writing, and addressed to the regent. The king, when he granted him an audience to take leave, did not omit to call him to account for his behaviour to Granvella, and alluded particularly to the livery invented in derision of the cardinal. Egmont protested that the whole affair had originated in a convivial joke, and nothing was further from their meaning than to derogate in the least from the respect that was due to royalty. "If he knew," he said, "that any individual among them had entertained such disloyal thoughts, he himself would challenge him to answer for it with his life."

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* Vita Vigl. §. 89. The person, from whose memoirs I have already drawn so many illustrations of the times of this epoch. His subsequent journey to Spain gave rise to the correspondence between him and the president, which is one of the most valuable documents for our history.

At his departure, the monarch made him a present of 50,000 florins, and engaged, moreover, to furnish a portion for his daughter, on her marriage. He also consigned to his care the young Farnese of Parma, whom, to gratify the regent his mother, he was sending to Brussels. The king's pretended mildness, and his professions of regard for the

Belgian nation, deceived the openhearted Fleming. Happy in the idea of being the bearer of so much felicity to his native country, when, in fact, it was more remote than ever. he quitted Madrid, satisfied beyond measure to think of the joy with which the provinces would welcome the message of their good king; but the opening of the royal answer in the Council of State at Brussels, disappointed all these pleasing hopes. "Although in regard to the religious edicts," this was its tenour, "his resolve was firm and immovable, and he would rather lose a thousand lives than consent to alter a single letter of it; still, moved by the representations of Count Egmont, he was, on the other hand, equally determined not to leave any gentle means untried to guard the people against the delusions of heresy, and so to avert from them that punishment which must otherwise infallibly overtake them. As he had now learned from the count, that the principal source of the existing errors in the faith was in the moral depravity of the clergy, the bad instruction and the neglected education of the young, he hereby empowered the regent to appoint a special commission of three bishops, and a convenient number of learned theologians, whose business it should be to consult about the necessary reforms, in order that the people might no longer be led astray through scandal, nor plunge into error through ignorance. As, moreover, he had been informed that the public executions of the heretics did but afford them an opportunity of boastfully displaying a foolhardy courage, and of deluding the common herd by an affectation of the glory of martyrdom, the commission was to devise means for putting in force the final sentence of the Inquisition with greater privacy, and thereby depriving condemned heretics of the honour of their obduracy." In order, however, to provide against the commission going beyond its prescribed limits, Philip expressly required that the Bishop of Ypres, a man whom he could rely on as a determined zealot for the Romish faith, should be one of the body. Their deliberations were to be conducted, if possible, in secrecy, while the object publicly assigned to them should be the introduction of the Tridentine decrees. For this, his motive seems to have been twofold; on the one hand, not to alarm the court of Rome by the assembling of a private council; nor, on the other, to afford any encouragement to the spirit of rebellion in the provinces. At its sessions the duchess was to preside, assisted by some of the more loyally disposed of her counsellors, and regularly transmit to Philip a written account of its transactions. To meet her most pressing wants, he sent her a small supply in money. He also gave her hopes of a visit from himself; first, however, it was necessary that the war with the Turks, who were then expected in hostile force before Malta, should be terminated. As to the proposed augmentation of the Council of State, and its union with the Privy Council and Chamber of Finance, it was passed over in perfect silence: the Duke of Arschot, however, who is already known to us as a zealous royalist, obtained a voice and seat in the latter. Viglius, indeed, was allowed to retire from the Presidency of the Privy Council, but he was obliged, nevertheless, to continue to discharge its duties for four more years, because his successor, Carl Tyssenaque, of the council for Netherlandish affairs in Madrid, could not sooner be spared.

SEVERER RELIGIOUS EDICTS —UNIVERSAL OPPOSITION OF THE NATION.

Scarcely was Egmont returned, when severer edicts against heretics, which, as it were, pursued him from Spain, contradicted the joyful tidings which he had brought of a happy change in the sentiments of the monarch. They were at the same time accompanied with a transcript of the decrees of Trent, as they were acknowledged in Spain, and were now to be proclaimed in the Netherlands also; with it came likewise the death warrants of some Anabaptists and other kinds of heretics. "The count has been beguiled," William the Silent was now heard to say, "and deluded by Spanish cunning. Self-love and vanity have blinded his penetration; for his own advantage he has forgotten the general welfare." The treachery of the Spanish ministry was now exposed, and this dishonest proceeding roused the indignation of the noblest in the land. But no one felt it more acutely than Count Egmont, who now perceived himself to have been the tool of Spanish duplicity, and to have become unwittingly the betrayer of his own country. "These specious favours then," he exclaimed loudly and bitterly, "were nothing but an artifice, to expose me to the ridicule of my fellow citizens, and to destroy my good name. If this is the fashion after which the king purposes to keep the promises which he made to me in Spain, let who will take Flanders; for my part, I will prove by my retirement from public business that I have no share in this breach of faith" In fact, the Spanish ministry could not have adopted a surer method of breaking the credit of so important a man, than by exhibiting him to his fellow citizens, who adored him, as one whom they had succeeded in deluding.

Meanwhile the commission had been appointed, and had unanimously come to the following decision: "Whether for the moral reformation of the clergy, or for the religious instruction of the people, or for the education of youth, such abundant provision had already been made in the decrees of Trent, that nothing now was requisite but to put these decrees in force as speedily as possible. The imperial edicts against the heretics already, ought on no account to be recalled or modified; the courts of justice, however, might be secretly instructed to punish with death none but obstinate heretics or preachers, to make a difference between the different sects, and to show consideration to the age, rank, sex, or disposition of the accused. If it were really the case, that public executions did but inflame fanaticism, then, perhaps, the unheroic, less observed, but still equally severe punishment of the galleys, would be well adapted to bring down all high notions of martyrdom. As to the delinquencies which might have arisen out of mere levity, curiosity, and thoughtlessness, it would perhaps be sufficient to punish them by fines, exile, or even corporal chastisement."

During these deliberations, which, moreover, it was requisite to submit to the king at Madrid, and to wait for the notification of his approval of them, the time passed away unprofitably, the proceedings against the sectaries being either suspended, or, at least, conducted very supinely. Since the recall of Granvella, the disunion which prevailed in the higher councils, and from thence had extended to the provincial courts of justice, combined with the mild feelings generally of the nobles on the subject of religion, had raised the courage of the sects, and allowed free scope to the proselyting mania of their apostles. The inquisitors, too, had fallen into contempt, in consequence of the secular arm withdrawing its support, and in many places even openly taking their victims under its protection. The Roman Catholic part of the nation had formed great expectations from the decrees of the Synod of Trent, as well as from Egmont's embassy to Spain; but in the latter case, their hopes had scarcely been justified by the joyous tidings which the count had brought back, and, in the integrity of his heart, left nothing undone to make known as widely as possible. The more disused the nation had become to severity in matters pertaining to religion, the more acutely was it likely to feel the sudden adoption of even still more rigorous measures. In this position of affairs, the royal rescript arrived from Spain, in answer to the proposition of the bishops and the last despatches of the regent. "Whatever interpretation (such was its tenor) Count Egmont may have given to the king's verbal communications, it had never, in the remotest manner, entered his mind to think of altering in the slightest degree the penal statutes which the Emperor, his father, had five-and-thirty years ago published in the provinces. These edicts he therefore commanded should henceforth be carried rigidly into effect, the Inquisition should receive the most active support from the secular arm, and the decrees of the Council of Trent be irrevocably and unconditionally acknowledged in all the provinces of his Netherlands. He acquiesced fully in the opinion of the bishops and canonists, as to the sufficiency of the Tridentine decrees as guides in all points of reformation of the clergy or instruction of the people; but he could not concur with them as to the mitigation of punishment which they proposed, in consideration either of the age, sex, or character of individuals, since he was of opinion that his edicts were in no degree wanting in moderation. To nothing, but want of zeal and disloyalty on the part of the judges, could he ascribe the progress which heresy had already made in the country. In future, therefore, whoever among them should be thus wanting in zeal, must be removed from his office, and make room for a more honest judge. The Inquisition ought to pursue its appointed path firmly, fearlessly, and dispassionately, without regard to or consideration of human feelings, and was to look neither before nor behind. He would always be ready to approve of all its measures, however extreme, if it only avoided public scandal."

This letter of the king, to which the Orange party have ascribed all the subsequent troubles of the Netherlands, caused the most violent excitement amongst the state counsellors, and the expressions which in society they either accidentally or intentionally let fall from them with regard to it, spread terror and alarm amongst the people. The dread of the Spanish Inquisition returned with new force, and with it came fresh apprehensions of the subversion of their liberties. Already the people fancied they could hear prisons building, chains and fetters forging, and see piles of faggots collecting. Society was occupied with this one theme of conversation, and fear kept no longer within bounds. Placards were affixed to houses of the nobles, in which they were called upon, as formerly Rome called on her Brutus, to come forward and save expiring freedom. Biting pasquinades were published against the new bishops—tormentors as they were called; the clergy were ridiculed in comedies, and abuse spared the throne as little as the Romish see.

Terrified by the rumours which were afloat, the regent called together all the counsellors of state to consult them on the course she ought to adopt in this perilous crisis. Opinion varied and disputes were violent. Undecided between fear and duty, they hesitated to come to a conclusion, until, at last, the aged senator, Viglius, rose and surprised the whole assembly by his opinion. "It would," he said, "be the height of folly in us to think of promulgating the royal edict at the present moment; the king must be informed of the reception which, in all probability, it will now meet. In the mean time, the inquisitors must be enjoined to use their power with moderation, and to abstain from severity." But if these words of the aged president surprised the whole assembly, still greater was the astonishment when the Prince of Orange stood up and opposed his advice. "The royal will," he said, "is too clearly and too precisely stated; it is the result of too long and too mature deliberation for us to venture to delay its execution, without bringing on ourselves the reproach of the most culpable obstinacy." "That I take on myself," interrupted Viglius, "I oppose myself to his displeasure. If, by this delay, we purchase for him the peace of the Netherlands, our opposition will eventually secure for us the lasting gratitude of the king." The regent already began to incline to the advice of Viglius, when the prince vehemently interposing, "What," he demanded, "what have the many representations which we have already made effected? of what avail was the embassy we so lately despatched? Nothing! And what then do we wait for more? Shall we, his state counsellors, bring upon ourselves the whole weight of his displeasure, by determining, at our own peril, to render him a service for which he will never thank us?" Undecided and uncertain, the whole assembly remained silent: but no one had courage enough to assent to or reply to him. But the prince had appealed to the fears of the regent, and these left her no choice. The consequences of her unfortunate obedience to the king's command will soon appear. But, on the other hand, if by a wise disobedience she had avoided these fatal consequences, is it clear that the result would not have been the same? However, she had adopted the most fatal of the two counsels; happen what would, the royal ordinance was to be promulgated. This time, therefore, faction prevailed, and the advice of the only true friend of the government who, to serve his monarch, was ready to incur his displeasure, was disregarded. With this session terminated the peace of the regent; from this day the Netherlands dated all the trouble which uninterruptedly visited their country. As the counsellors separated, the Prince of Orange said to one who stood nearest to him, "Now will soon be acted a great tragedy."*

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* The conduct of the Prince of Orange in this meeting of the Council has been appealed to by historians of the Spanish party as a proof of his dishonesty, and they have availed themselves over and over again to blacken his character. "He," say they, "who had, invariably up to this period, both by word and deed, opposed the measures of the court, so long as he had any ground to fear that the king's measures could be successfully carried out, supported them now for the first time, when he was convinced that a scrupulous obedience to the royal orders would inevitably prejudice him. In order to convince the king of his folly in disregarding his warnings; in order to be able to boast, 'this I foresaw,' and 'I foretold that,' he was willing to risk the welfare of his nation, for which alone he had hitherto professed to struggle. The whole tenor of his previous conduct proved that he held the enforcement of the edicts to be an evil; nevertheless, he at once becomes false to his own convictions, and follows an opposite course; although, so far as the nation was concerned, the same grounds existed as had dictated his former measures; and he changed his conduct simply that the result might be different to the king." "It is clear, therefore," continue his adversaries, "that the welfare of the nation had less weight with him than his animosity to his sovereign. In order to gratify

An edict, therefore, was issued to all the governors of provinces, commanding them rigorously to enforce the mandates of the emperor against heretics, as well as those which had been passed under the present government, the decrees of the Council of Trent, and those of the episcopal commission, which had lately sat to give all the aid of the civil force to the Inquisition, and also to enjoin a similar line of conduct on the officers of government under them. More effectually to secure their object, every governor was to select from his own council an efficient officer who should frequently make the circuit of the province, and institute strict inquiries into the obedience shown by the inferior officers to these commands, and then transmit quarterly to the capital an exact report of their visitation. A copy of the Tridentine decrees, according to the Spanish original, was also sent to the archbishops and bishops, with an intimation, that in case of their needing the assistance of the secular power, the governors of their dioceses, with their troops, were placed at their disposal. Against these decrees no privilege was to avail; however, the king willed and commanded that the particular territorial rights of the provinces and towns should in no case be infringed.

These commands, which were publicly read in every town by an herald, produced an effect on the people, which in the

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his hatred to the latter he does not hesitate to sacrifice the former." But is it then true, that by calling for the promulgation of these edicts, he sacrificed the nation? or, to speak more correctly, did he carry the edicts into effect by insisting on their promulgation? Can it not, on the contrary, be shown with far more probability, that this was really the only way effectually to frustrate them? The nation was in a ferment, and the indignant people would (there was reason to expect, and as Viglius himself seems to have apprehended) show so decided a spirit of opposition as must compel the king to yield. "Now," says Orange, "my country feels all the impulse necessary for it to contend successfully with tyranny! If I neglect the present moment, the tyrant will, by secret negociation and intrigue, find means to obtain by stealth what by open force he could not. The same object will be steadily pursued, only with greater caution and forbearance; but extremity alone can combine the people to unity of purpose, and move them to bold measures." It is clear, therefore, that, with regard to the king, the prince did but change his language only; but that, as far as the people was concerned, his conduct was perfectly consistent. And what duties did he owe the king, apart from those he owed the republic? Was he to oppose an arbitrary act in the very moment when it was about to entail a just retribution on its author? Would he have done his duty to his country, if he had deterred its oppressor from a precipitate step, which alone could save it from its otherwise unavoidable misery?

fullest manner verified the fears of the President Viglius and the hopes of the Prince of Orange. Nearly all the governors of provinces refused compliance with them, and threatened to throw up their appointments, if the attempt should be made to compel their obedience. "The ordinance," they wrote back, "was based on a statement of the numbers of the sectaries, which was altogether false *. Justice was appalled at the prodigious crowd of victims which daily accumulated under its hands; to destroy by the flames 50,000 or 60,000 persons from their districts was no commission for them." The inferior clergy too, in particular, were loud in their outcries against the decrees of Trent, which cruelly assailed their ignorance and corruption, and which moreover threatened them with a reform they so much detested. Sacrificing therefore the highest interests of their church to their own private advantage, they bitterly reviled the decrees and the whole Council, and with liberal hand, scattered the seeds of revolt in the minds of the people. The same outcry was now revived, which the monks had formerly raised against the new bishops. The Archbishop of Cambray succeeded at last, but not without great opposition, in causing the decrees to be proclaimed It cost more labour to effect this in Malines and Utrecht, where the archbishops were at strife with their clergy, who, as they were accused, preferred to involve the whole church in ruin, rather than submit to a reformation of morals.

Of all the provinces, Brabant raised its voice the loudest. The states of this province appealed to their great privilege, which protected their members from being brought before a foreign court of justice. They spoke loudly of the oath by which the king had bound himself to observe all their statutes, and of the conditions under which they alone had sworn allegiance to him. Louvain, Antwerp, Brussels, and Herzogenbusch, solemnly protested against the decrees, and trans-

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* The number of the heretics was very unequally computed by the two parties, according as the interests and passions of either made its increase or diminution desirable, and the same party often contradicted itself, when its interest changed. If the question related to new measures of oppression, to the introduction of the inquisitional tribunals, &c., the numbers of the Protestants were countless and interminable. If, on the other hand, the question was of lenity towards them, of ordinances to their advantage, they were now reduced to such an insignificant number, that it would not repay the trouble of making an innovation for this small body of ill-minded people.

mitted their protests in distinct memorials to the regent. The latter, always hesitating and wavering, too timid to obey the king, and far more afraid to disobey him, again summoned her council, again listened to the arguments for and against the question, and at last, again gave her assent to the opinion, which, of all others, was the most perilous for her to adopt. A new reference to the king in Spain was proposed; the next moment it was asserted that so urgent a crisis did not admit of so dilatory a remedy; it was necessary for the regent to act on her own responsibility, and either defy the threatening aspect of despair, or to yield to it by modifying or retracting the royal ordinance. She, finally, caused the annals of Brabant to be examined, in order to discover, if possible, a precedent for the present case, in the instructions of the first Inquisitor, whom Charles V. had appointed to the province. These instructions, indeed, did not exactly correspond with those now given; but had not the king declared that he introduced no innovation? This was precedent enough, and it was declared that the new edicts must also be interpreted in accordance with the old and existing statutes of the province. This explanation gave, indeed, no satisfaction to the states of Brabant, who had loudly demanded the entire abolition of the Inquisition, but it was an encouragement to the other provinces to make similar protests, and an equally bold opposition. Without giving the duchess time to decide upon their remonstrances, they, on their own authority, ceased to obey the Inquisition, and withdrew their aid from it. The Inquisitors, who had so recently been expressly urged to a more rigid execution of their duties, now saw themselves suddenly deserted by the secular arm, and robbed of all authority; while, in answer to their application for assistance, the court could give them only empty promises. The regent, by thus endeavouring to satisfy all parties, had displeased all.

During these negociations between the court, the councils, and the states, a universal spirit of revolt pervaded the whole nation. Men began to investigate the rights of the subject, and to scrutinize the prerogative of kings. "The Netherlanders were not so stupid," many were heard to say, with very little attempt at secrecy, "as not to know right well what was due from the subject to the sovereign, and from the king to the subject; and that, perhaps, means would yet be found to repel force with force, although at present there might be no appearance of it." In Antwerp, a placard was set up in several places, calling upon the town council to accuse the King of Spain before the supreme court, at Spires, of having broken his oath, and violated the liberties of the country, for Brabant, being a portion of the Burgundian circle, was included in the religious peace of Passau and Augsburg. About this time, too, the Calvinists published their confession of faith, and in a preamble, addressed to the king, declared that they, although a hundred thousand strong, kept themselves, nevertheless, quiet, and like the rest of his subjects, contributed to all the taxes of the country; from which it was evident, they added, that of themselves they entertained no ideas of insurrection. Bold and incendiary writings were publicly disseminated, which depicted the Spanish tyranny in the most odious colours, and reminded the nation of its privileges, and occasionally also of its powers.*

The warlike preparations of Philip against the Porte, as well as those which, for no intelligible reason, Eric, Duke of Brunswick, about this time made in the vicinity, contributed to strengthen the general suspicion that the Inquisition was to be forcibly imposed on the Netherlands. Many of the most eminent merchants, already spoke of quitting their houses and business, to seek in some other part of the world the liberty of which they were here deprived; others looked about for a leader, and let fall hints of forcible resistance and of foreign aid.

That, in this distressing position of affairs, the regent might be left entirely without an adviser and without support, she was now deserted by the only person, who was at the present moment indispensable to her, and who had contributed to plunge her into this embarrassment. "Without kindling a civil war," wrote to her William of Orange, "it was absolutely impossible to comply now with the orders of the king. If, however, obedience was to be insisted upon, he must beg that his place might be supplied by another, who would better answer the expectations of his majesty, and have more power than he had over the minds of the nation. The zeal which on every other occasion he had shown in the service of the crown would, he hoped, secure his present proceeding from misconstruction; for, as the case now stood, he had no alternative between disobeying the king, and injuring his country and himself." From this time forth, William of Orange retired from the Council of State to his town of Breda, where, in observant but scarcely inactive repose, he watched the course of affairs. Count Horn followed his example. Egmont, ever vacillating between the republic and the throne, ever wearying himself in the vain attempt to unite the good citizen with the obedient subject—Egmont, who was less able than the rest to dispense with the favour of the monarch, and to whom, therefore, it was less an object of indifference, could not bring himself to abandon the bright prospects which were now opening for him at the court of the regent. The Prince of Orange had, by his superior intellect, gained an influence over the regent, which great minds cannot fail to command from inferior spirits. His retirement had opened a void in her confidence, which Count Egmont was now to fill by virtue of that sympathy, which so naturally subsists between timidity, weakness, and good nature. As she was as much afraid of exasperating the people by an exclusive confidence in the adherents of the crown, as she was fearful of displeasing the king by too close an understanding with the declared leaders of the faction, a better object for her confidence could now hardly be presented, than this very Count Egmont, of whom, it could not be said, that he belonged to either of the two conflicting parties.

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* The regent mentioned to the king a number (3,000) of these writings. Strada 117. It is remarkable how important a part printing, and publicity in general, played in the rebellion of the Netherlands. Through this organ, one restless spirit spoke to millions. Besides the lampoons, which for the most part were composed with all the low scurrility and brutality, which was the distinguishing character of most of the Protestant polemical writings of the time, works were occasionally published which defended religious liberty in the fullest sense of the word.

BOOK III

CONSPIRACY OF THE NOBLES.

1565 Up to this point, the general peace had, it appears, been the sincere wish of the Prince of Orange, the Counts Egmont and Horn, and their friends. They had pursued the true interest of their sovereign as much as the general weal; at least their exertions and their actions had been as little at variance with the former as with the latter. Nothing had as yet occurred to make their motives suspected, or to manifest in them a rebellious spirit. What they had done, they had done in discharge of their bounden duty as members of a free state, as the representatives of the nation, as advisers of the king, as men of integrity and honour. The only weapons they had used to oppose the encroachments of the court had been remonstrances, modest complaints, petitions. They had never allowed themselves to be so far carried away by a just zeal for their good cause, as to transgress the limits of prudence and moderation, which, on many occasions, are so easily overstepped by party spirit. But all the nobles of the republic did not now listen to the voice of that prudence, all did not abide within the bounds of moderation.

While in the Council of State the great question was discussed, whether the nation was to be miserable or not, while its sworn deputies summoned to their assistance all the arguments of reason and of equity, and while the middle classes and the people contented themselves with empty complaints, menaces, and curses, that part of the nation which of all seemed least called upon, and on whose support least reliance had been placed, began to take more active measures. We have already described a class of the nobility whose services and wants Philip, at his accession, had not considered it necessary to remember. Of these, by far the greater number had asked for promotion from a much more urgent reason than a love of the mere honour. Many of them were deeply sunk in debt, from which, by their own resources, they could not hope to emancipate themselves. When then, in filling up appointments, Philip passed them over, he wounded them in a point far more sensitive than their pride. In these suitors he had, by his neglect, raised up so many idle spies and merciless judges of his actions, so many collectors and propagators of malicious rumour. As their pride did not quit them with their prosperity, so now, driven by necessity, they trafficked with the sole capital, which they could not alienate—their nobility, and the political influence of their names; and brought into circulation a coin, which only in such a period could have found currency—their protection. With a self-pride, to which they gave the more scope as it was all they could now call their own, they looked upon themselves as a strong intermediate power between the sovereign and the citizen, and believed themselves called upon to hasten to the rescue of the oppressed state, which looked imploringly to them for succour. This idea was ludicrous only so far as their self-conceit was concerned in it; the advantages which they contrived to draw from it were substantial enough. The Protestant merchants, who held in their hands the chief part of the wealth of the Netherlands, and who believed they could not, at any price, purchase too dearly the undisturbed exercise of their religion, did not fail to make use of this class of people, who stood idle in the market and ready to be hired. These very men, whom, at any other time, the merchants, in the pride of riches, would most probably have looked down upon, now appeared likely to do them good service through their numbers, their courage, their credit with the populace, their enmity to the government, nay, through their beggarly pride itself and their despair. On these grounds, they zealously endeavoured to form a close union with them, and diligently fostered the disposition for rebellion, while they also used every means to keep alive their high opinions of themselves, and what was most important, lured their poverty by well-applied pecuniary assistance and glittering promises. Few of them were so utterly insignificant as not to possess some influence, if not personally, yet at least by their relationship with higher and more powerful nobles; and if united, they would be able to raise a formidable voice against the crown. Many of them had either already joined the new sect, or were secretly inclined to it; and even those who were zealous Roman Catholics, had political or private grounds enough to set them against the decrees of Trent and the Inquisition. All, in fine, felt the call of vanity sufficiently powerful, not to allow the only moment to escape them in which they might possibly make some figure in the republic.

But much as might be expected from the co-operation of these men in a body, it would have been futile and ridiculous to build any hopes on any one of them singly; and the great difficulty was to effect a union among them. Even to bring them together, some unusual occurrence was necessary; and, fortunately, such an incident presented itself. The nuptials of Baron Montigny, one of the Belgian nobles, as also those of the Prince Alexander of Parma, which took place about this time in Brussels, assembled in that town a great number of the Belgian nobles. On this occasion, relations met relations; new friendships were formed, and old renewed; and while the distress of the country was the topic of conversation, wine and mirth unlocked lips and hearts, hints were dropped of union among themselves, and of an alliance with foreign powers. These accidental meetings soon led to concealed ones, and public discussions gave rise to secret consultations Two German barons moreover, a Count of Holle, and a Count of Schwarzenberg, who at this time were on a visit to the Netherlands, omitted nothing to awaken expectations of assistance from their neighbours. Count Louis of Nassau, too, had also, a short time before, visited several German courts to ascertain their sentiments *. It has even been asserted, that secret emissaries of the admiral Coligny were seen at this time in Brabant; but this, however, may be reasonably doubted.

If ever a political crisis was favourable to an attempt at revolution, it was the present. A woman at the helm of government; the governors of provinces disaffected themselves, and disposed to wink at insubordination in others, most of the state counsellors quite inefficient; no army to fall back upon; the few troops there were, long since discontented on account of the outstanding arrears of pay, and already too often deceived by false promises to be enticed by new; com-

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* It was not without cause, that the Prince of Orange suddenly disappeared from Brussels in order to be present at the election of a king of Rome in Frankfort. An assembly of so many German princes must have greatly favoured a negociation.

manded, moreover, by officers who despised the Inquisition from their hearts, and would have blushed to draw a sword in its behalf; and lastly, no money in the treasury to enlist new troops or to hire foreigners. The court at Brussels, as well as the three councils, not only divided by internal dissensions, but in the highest degree venal and corrupt; the regent without full powers to act on the spot, and the king at a distance; his adherents in the provinces few, uncertain, and dispirited; the faction numerous and powerful; two-thirds of the people irritated against popery and desirous of a change—such was the unfortunate weakness of the government, and the more unfortunate still that this weakness was so well known to its enemies!

In order to unite so many minds in the prosecution of a common object, a leader was still wanting, and a few influential names, to give political weight to their enterprise. The two were supplied by Count Louis of Nassau, and Henry Count Brederode, both members of the most illustrious houses of the Belgian nobility, who voluntarily placed themselves at the head of the undertaking. Louis of Nassau, brother of the Prince of Orange, united many splendid qualities, which made him worthy of appearing on so noble and important a stage. In Geneva, where he studied, he had imbibed at once a hatred to the hierarchy and a love to the new religion; and on his return to his native country, had not failed to enlist proselytes to his opinions The republican bias which his mind had received in that school, kindled in him a bitter hatred of all that bore the Spanish name, which animated his whole conduct, and only left him with his latest breath. Popery and Spanish rule were in his mind identical, as indeed they were in reality; and the abhorrence which he entertained for the one, helped to strengthen his dislike to the other. Closely as the brothers agreed in their inclinations and aversions, the ways by which each sought to gratify them were widely dissimilar. Youth and an ardent temperament did not allow the younger brother to follow the tortuous course through which the elder wound himself to his object. A cold, calm circumspection carried the latter slowly, but surely, to his aim; and with a pliable subtilty he made all things subserve his purpose; with a fool-hardy impetuosity, which overthrew all obstacles, the other at times compelled success, but oftener accelerated disaster. For this reason, William was a general, and Louis never more than an adventurer; a sure and powerful arm, if only it were directed by a wise head. Louis's pledge once given was good for ever; his alliances survived every vicissitude, for they were mostly formed in the pressing moment of necessity, and misfortune binds more firmly than thoughtless joy. He loved his brother as dearly as he did his cause, and for the latter he died.

Henry of Brederode, Baron of Viane, and Burgrave of Utrecht, was descended from the old Dutch counts, who formerly ruled that province as sovereign princes. So ancient a title endeared him to the people, among whom the memory of their former lords still survived and was the more treasured, the less they felt they had gained by the change. This hereditary splendour increased the self-conceit of a man upon whose tongue the glory of his ancestors continually hung, and who dwelt the more on former greatness even amidst its ruins, the more unpromising the aspect of his own condition became. Excluded from the honours and employments to which, in his opinion, his own merits and his noble ancestry fully entitled him, (a squadron of light cavalry being all which was entrusted to him,) he hated the government, and did not scruple boldly to canvass and to rail at its measures. By these means, he won the hearts of the people. He also favoured in secret the evangelical belief; less, however, as a conviction of his better reason, than as an opposition to the government. With more loquacity than eloquence, and more audacity than courage, he was brave rather from not believing in danger, than from being superior to it. Louis of Nassau burned for the cause which he defended, Brederode for the glory of being its defender; the former was satisfied in acting for his party; the latter discontented if he did not stand at its head. No one was more fit to lead off the dance in a rebellion, but it could hardly have a worse ballet-master. Contemptible as his threatened designs really were, the illusion of the multitude might have imparted to them weight and terror, if it had occurred to them to set up a pretender in his person. His claim to the possessions of his ancestors was an empty name; but even a name was now sufficient for the general disaffection to rally round. A pamphlet, which was at the time disseminated amongst the people, openly called him the heir of Holland, and his engraved portrait, which was publicly exhibited, bore the boastful inscription:—

> Sum Brederodus ego, Batavæ non infima gentis
> Gloria, virtutem non unica pagina claudit.

(1565.) Besides these two, there were others also from among the most illustrious of the Flemish nobles—the young Count Charles of Mansfeld, a son of that nobleman, whom we have found among the most zealous royalists, the Count Kinlemburg, two Counts of Bergen and of Battenburg, John of Marnix, Baron of Thoulouse, Philip of Marnix, Baron of St. Aldegonde, with several others, who joined the league, which about the middle of November, in the year 1565, was formed at the house of Von Hammes, king at arms of the Golden Fleece. Here it was that six men decided the destiny of their country, (as formerly a few confederates consummated the liberty of Switzerland,) kindled the torch of a forty years' war, and laid the basis of a freedom which they themselves were never to enjoy. The objects of the league were set forth in the following declaration, to which Philip of Marnix was the first to subscribe his name. "Whereas certain ill-disposed persons, under the mask of a pious zeal, but in reality under the impulse of avarice and ambition, have by their evil counsels persuaded our most gracious sovereign the king, to introduce into these countries the abominable tribunal of the Inquisition—a tribunal diametrically opposed to all laws human and divine, and in cruelty far surpassing the barbarous institutions of heathenism — which raises the inquisitors above every other power, and debases man to a perpetual bondage, and by its snares exposes the honest citizen to a constant fear of death, inasmuch as any one (priest, it may be, or a faithless friend, a Spaniard or a reprobate,) has it in his power, at any moment, to cause whom he will, to be dragged before that tribunal, to be placed in confinement, condemned and executed, without the accused ever being allowed to face his accuser, or to adduce proof of his innocence—we, therefore, the undersigned, have bound ourselves to watch over the safety of our families, our estates, and our own persons. To this we hereby pledge ourselves, and to this end bind ourselves as a sacred fraternity, and vow with a solemn oath, to oppose to the best of our power the in troduction of this tribunal into these countries, whether it be attempted openly or secretly, and under whatever name it may be disguised. We at the same time declare, that we are far from intending anything unlawful against the king our sovereign; rather is it our unalterable purpose to support and defend the royal prerogative, and to maintain peace, and, as far as lies in our power, to put down all rebellion. In accordance with this purpose, we have sworn, and now again swear, to hold sacred the government, and to respect it both in word and deed, which witness Almighty God!

"Further, we vow and swear to protect and defend one another, in all times, and places, against all attacks whatsoever touching the articles which are set forth in this covenant. We hereby bind ourselves, that no accusation of any of our followers, in whatever name it may be clothed, whether rebellion, sedition, or otherwise, shall avail to annul our oath towards the accused, or absolve us from our obligation towards him. No act which is directed against the Inquisition, can deserve the name of a rebellion. Whoever, therefore, shall be placed in arrest on any such charge, we here pledge ourselves to assist him to the utmost of our ability, and to endeavour by every allowable means to effect his liberation. In this, however, as in all matters, but especially in the conduct of all measures against the tribunal of the Inquisition, we submit ourselves to the general regulations of the league, or to the decision of those whom we may unanimously appoint our counsellors and leaders

"In witness hereof, and in confirmation of this our common league and covenant, we call upon the holy name of the living God, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that are therein, who searches the hearts, the consciences, and the thoughts, and knows the purity of ours. We implore the aid of his Holy Spirit, that success and honour may crown our undertaking to the glory of his name, and to the peace and blessing of our country!"

This covenant was immediately translated into several languages, and quickly disseminated through the provinces. To swell the league as speedily as possible, each of the confederates assembled all his friends, relations, adherents, and retainers. Great banquets were held, which lasted whole days—irresistible temptations for a sensual luxurious people, in whom the deepest wretchedness could not stifle the propensity for voluptuous living. Whoever repaired to these banquets, and every one was welcome, was plied with officious assurances of friendship, and when heated with wine, carried away by the example of numbers, and overcome by the fire of a wild eloquence. The hands of many were guided while they subscribed their signatures; the hesitating were derided, the pusillanimous threatened, the scruples of loyalty clamoured down; some even were quite ignorant what they were signing, and were ashamed afterwards to inquire. To many whom mere levity had brought to the entertaiment, the general enthusiasm left no choice, while the splendour of the confederacy allured the mean, and its numbers encouraged the timorous. The abettors of the league had not scrupled at the artifice of counterfeiting the signature and seals of the Prince of Orange, Counts Egmont, Horn, Megen, and others, a trick which won them hundreds of adherents. This was done, especially with a view of influencing the officers of the army, in order to be safe in this quarter, if matters should come at last to violence. The device succeeded with many, especially with subalterns, and Count Brederode even drew his sword upon an ensign who wished time for consideration. Men of all classes and conditions signed it. Religion made no difference Roman Catholic priests even were associates of the league. The motives were not the same with all, but the pretext was similar. The Roman Catholics desired simply the abolition of the Inquisition, and a mitigation of the edicts; the Protestants aimed at unlimited freedom of conscience. A few daring spirits only entertained so bold a project as the overthrow of the present government, while the needy and indigent based the vilest hopes on a general anarchy. A farewell entertainment, which about this very time was given to the Counts Schwarzenberg and Holle in Breda, and another shortly afterwards in Hogstraten, drew many of the principal nobility to these two places, and of these several had already signed the covenant. The Prince of Orange, Counts Egmont, Horn, and Megen were present at the latter banquet, but without any concert or design, and without having themselves any share in the league, although one of Egmont's own secretaries, and some of the servants of the other three noblemen had openly joined it. At this entertainment, three hundred persons gave in their adhesion to the covenant, and the question was mooted whether the whole body should present themselves before the regent armed or unarmed, with a declaration, or with a petition? Horn and Orange (Egmont would not countenance the business in any way) were called in as arbiters upon this point, and they decided in favour of the more moderate and submissive procedure. By taking this office upon them, they exposed themselves to the charge of having in no very covert manner lent their sanction to the enterprise of the confederates. In compliance, therefore, with their advice, it was determined to present their address unarmed and in the form of a petition, and a day was appointed, on which they should assemble in Brussels.

The first intimation the regent received of this conspiracy of the nobles, was given by the Count of Megen soon after his return to the capital. "There was," he said, "an enterprise on foot; no less than three hundred of the nobles were implicated in it; it referred to religion; the members of it had bound themselves together by an oath; they reckoned much on foreign aid; she would soon know more about it." Though urgently pressed, he would give her no further information. "A nobleman," he said, "had confided it to him under the seal of secrecy, and he had pledged his word of honour to him." What really withheld him from giving her any further explanation, was, in all probability, not so much any delicacy about his honour, as his hatred of the Inquisition, which he would not willingly do any thing to advance. Soon after him, Count Egmont delivered to the regent a copy of the covenant, and also gave her the names of the conspirators, with some few exceptions. Nearly about the same time the Prince of Orange wrote to her: "There was, as he had heard, an army enlisted, four hundred officers were already named, and twenty thousand men would presently appear in arms." Thus the rumour was intentionally exaggerated, and the danger was multiplied in every mouth.

The regent, petrified with alarm at the first announcement of these tidings, and guided solely by her fears, hastily called together all the members of the Council of State who happened to be then in Brussels, and at the same time sent a pressing summons to the Prince of Orange and Count

Horn, inviting them to resume their seats in the senate Before the latter could arrive, she consulted with Egmont, Megen, and Barlaimont what course was to be adopted in the present dangerous posture of affairs. The question debated was, whether it would be better to have recourse to arms, or to yield to the emergency and grant the demands of the confederates; or whether they should be put off with promises, and an appearance of compliance, in order to gain time for procuring instructions from Spain, and obtaining money and troops? For the first plan the requisite supplies were wanting, and, what was equally requisite, confidence in the army, of which there seemed reason to doubt whether it had not been already gained by the conspirators. The second expedient would, it was quite clear, never be sanctioned by the king; besides, it would serve rather to raise than depress the courage of the confederates; while, on the other hand, a compliance with their reasonable demands, and a ready, unconditional pardon of the past, would, in all probability, stifle the rebellion in the cradle. The last opinion was supported by Megen and Egmont, but opposed by Barlaimont. "Rumour," said the latter, "had exaggerated the matter; it is impossible that so formidable an armament could have been prepared so secretly and so rapidly. It was but a band of a few outcasts and desperadoes, instigated by two or three enthusiasts, nothing more. All will be quiet after a few heads have been struck off." The regent determined to await the opinion of the Council of State, which was shortly to assemble; in the meanwhile, however, she was not inactive. The fortifications in the most important places were inspected, and the necessary repairs speedily executed; her ambassadors at foreign courts received orders to redouble their vigilance; expresses were sent off to Spain. At the same time, she caused the report to be revived of the near advent of the king, and in her external deportment put on a show of that imperturbable firmness, which awaits attack without intending easily to yield to it. At the end of March, (four whole months consequently from the framing of the covenant,) the whole State Council assembled in Brussels. There were present, the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Arschot, Counts Egmont, Bergen, Megen, Arenberg, Horn, Hogstraten, Barlaimont, and others; the Barons Montigny and Hachicourt, all the knights of the

Golden Fleece, with the President Viglius, State Counsellor Bruxelles, and the other assessors of the Privy Council. Several letters were produced, which gave a clearer insight into the nature and objects of the conspiracy. The extremity to which the regent was reduced, gave the disaffected a power which on the present occasion they did not neglect to use. Venting their long suppressed indignation, they indulged in bitter complaints against the court, and against the government. "But lately," said the Prince of Orange, "the king sent forty thousand gold florins to the Queen of Scotland, to support her in her undertakings against England, and he allows his Netherlands to be burdened with debt. Not to mention the unseasonableness of this subsidy, and its fruitless expenditure, why should he bring upon us the resentment of a queen, who is both so important to us as a friend, and as an enemy so much to be dreaded?" The prince did not even refrain on the present occasion from glancing at the concealed hatred, which the king was suspected of cherishing against the family of Nassau, and against him in particular. "It is well known," he said, "that he has plotted with the hereditary enemies of my house to take away my life, and that he waits with impatience only for a suitable opportunity." His example opened the lips of Count Horn also, and of many others besides, who, with passionate vehemence, descanted on their own merits and the ingratitude of the king. With difficulty did the regent succeed in silencing the tumult, and in recalling attention to the proper subject of the debate. The question was, whether the confederates, of whom it was now known that they intended to appear at court with a petition, should be admitted or not? The Duke of Arschot, Counts Aremberg, Megen, and Barlaimont gave their negative to the proposition. "What need of five hundred persons," said the latter, "to deliver a small memorial? This paradox of humility and defiance implies no good. Let them send to us one respectable man from among their number, without pomp, without assumption, and so submit their application to us Otherwise, shut the gates upon them, or if some insist on their admission, let them be closely watched, and let the first act of insolence which any one of them shall be guilty of be punished with death." In this advice concurred Count Mansfeld whose own son was among the conspirators; he had even threatened to disinherit his son, if he did not quickly abandon the league.

Counts Megen, also, and Aremberg hesitated to receive the petition; the Prince of Orange, however, Counts Egmont, Horn, Hogstraten, and others voted emphatically for it. "The confederates," they declared, "were known to them as men of integrity and honour; a great part of them were connected with themselves by friendship and relationship, and they dared vouch for their behaviour. Every subject was allowed to petition; a right which was enjoyed by the meanest individual in the state, could not, without injustice, be denied to so respectable a body of men." It was therefore resolved, by a majority of votes, to admit the confederates, on the condition that they should appear unarmed, and conduct themselves temperately. The squabbles of the members of Council had occupied the greater part of the sitting, so that it was necessary to adjourn the discussion to the following day. In order that the principal matter in debate might not again be lost sight of in useless complaints, the regent at once hastened to the point. "Brederode, we are informed," she said, "is coming to us, with an address in the name of the league, demanding the abolition of the Inquisition, and a mitigation of the edicts. The advice of my senate is to guide me in my answer to him; but before you give your opinions on this point, permit me to premise a few words. I am told that there are many, even amongst yourselves, who load the religious edicts of the Emperor, my father, with open reproaches, and describe them to the people as inhuman and barbarous. Now I ask you, lords and gentlemen, knights of the Fleece, counsellors of his majesty and of the state, whether you did not yourselves vote for these edicts, whether the states of the realm have not recognised them as lawful? Why is that now blamed, which was formerly declared right? Is it because they have now become even more necessary than they then were? Since when is the Inquisition a new thing in the Netherlands? Is it not full sixteen years ago since the Emperor established it? And wherein is it more cruel than the edicts? If it be allowed that the latter were the work of wisdom, if the universal consent of the states has sanctioned them—why this opposition to the former, which is nevertheless far more humane than the edicts, if they are to be observed to the letter? Speak now freely; I am not desirous of fettering your decision; but it is your business to see that it is not misled by passion and prejudice." The Council of State was again, as it always had been, divided between two opinions; but the few who spoke for the Inquisition, and the literal execution of the edicts, were outvoted by the opposite party, with the Prince of Orange at its head. "Would to heaven," he began, "that my representations had been then thought worthy of attention, when as yet the grounds of apprehension were remote; things would, in that case, never have been carried so far as to make recourse to extreme measures indispensable, nor would men have been plunged deeper in error by the very means which were intended to beguile them from their delusion. We are all unanimous on the one main point. We all wish to see the Catholic religion safe; if this end can be secured without the aid of the Inquisition, it is well, and we offer our wealth and our blood to its service; but on this very point it is that our opinions are divided.

"There are two kinds of Inquisition; the See of Rome lays claim to the one, the other has, from time immemorial, been exercised by the bishops. The force of prejudice and of custom, has made the latter light and supportable to us. It will find little opposition in the Netherlands, and the augmented numbers of the bishops will make it effective. To what purpose then insist on the former, the mere name of which is revolting to all the feelings of our minds? When so many nations exist without it, why should it be imposed on us? Before Luther appeared it was never heard of; but the troubles with Luther happened at a time when there was an inadequate number of spiritual overseers, and when the few bishops were moreover indolent, and the licentiousness of the clergy excluded them from the office of judges. Now all is changed; we now count as many bishops as there are provinces. Why should not the policy of the government adjust itself to the altered circumstances of the times? We want leniency, not severity. The repugnance of the people is manifest—this we must seek to appease, if we would not have it burst out into rebellion. With the death of Pius IV the full powers of the inquisitors have expired; the new

Pope has as yet sent no ratification of their authority, without which no one formerly ventured to exercise his office. Now, therefore, is the time when it can be suspended without infringing the rights of any party.

"What I have stated with regard to the Inquisition, holds equally good in respect to the edicts also. The exigency of the times called them forth, but are not those times passed? So long an experience of them ought at last to have taught us, that against heresy no means are less successful than the faggot and the sword. What incredible progress has not the new religion made during only the last few years in the provinces; and if we investigate the cause of this increase, we shall find it principally in the glorious constancy of those who have fallen sacrifices to the truth of their opinions. Carried away by sympathy and admiration, men begin to weigh in silence whether what is maintained with such invincible courage may not really be the truth. In France and in England, the same severities may have been inflicted on the Protestants, but have they been attended with any better success there than here? The very earliest Christians boasted that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. The emperor Julian, the most terrible enemy that Christianity ever experienced was fully persuaded of this. Convinced that persecution did but kindle enthusiasm, he betook himself to ridicule and derision, and found these weapons far more effective than force. In the Greek empire, different teachers of heresy have arose at different times. Arius under Constantine, Aetius under Constantius, Nestorius under Theodosius. But even against these arch heretics and their disciples, such cruel measures were never resorted to as are thought necessary against our unfortunate country—and yet where are all those sects now, which once a whole world, I had almost said, could not contain? This is the natural course of heresy. If it is treated with contempt, it crumbles into insignificance. It is as iron, which if it lies idle, corrodes, and only becomes sharp by use. Let no notice be paid to it, and it loses its most powerful attraction, the magic of what is new and what is forbidden. Why will we not content ourselves with the measures which have been approved of by the wisdom of such great rulers? Example is ever the safest guide.

"But what need to go to pagan antiquity for guidance and example, when we have near at hand the glorious precedent of Charles V., the greatest of kings, who taught at last by experience, abandoned the bloody path of persecution, and for many years before his abdication, adopted milder measures. And Philip himself, our most gracious sovereign, seemed at first strongly inclined to leniency, until the counsels of a Granvella and of others like him changed these views; but with what right or wisdom, they may settle between themselves. To me, however, it has always appeared indispensable, that legislation, to be wise and successful, must adjust itself to the manners and maxims of the times. In conclusion, I would beg to remind you of the close understanding, which subsists between the Huguenots and the Flemish Protestants. Let us beware of exasperating them any further. Let us not act the part of French Catholics towards them, lest they should play the Huguenots against us, and like the latter, plunge their country into the horrors of a civil war.' *

It was, perhaps, not so much the irresistible truth of his arguments, which moreover were supported by a decisive majority in the senate, as rather the ruinous state of the military resources, and the exhaustion of the treasury, that prevented the adoption of the opposite opinion which recommended an appeal to the force of arms, that the Prince of Orange had chiefly to thank for the attention which now, at last, was paid to his representations. In order to avert at first the violence of the storm, and to gain time, which was so necessary, to place the government in a better state of preparation, it was agreed that a portion of the demands should be accorded to the confederates. It was also resolved to mitigate the penal statutes of the emperor, as he himself would certainly mitigate them, were he again to appear among them at that day—and as, indeed, he had once shown, under circumstances very similar to the present, that he did not think it derogatory to his high dignity to do. The Inquisition was not to be introduced in any place where it did not

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* No one need wonder, says Burgundias, (a vehement stickler for the Roman Catholic religion and the Spanish party,) that the speech of this Prince evinced so much acquaintance with philosophy; he had acquired it in his intercourse with Balduin. 180. Barry, 174—178. Hopper, 72. Strada, 123, 124.

already exist, and where it had been, it should adopt a milder system, or even be entirely suspended, especially since the inquisitors had not yet been confirmed in their office by the pope. The latter reason was put prominently forward, in order to deprive the Protestants of the gratification of ascribing the concessions to any fear of their own power, or to the justice of their demands. The Privy Council was commissioned to draw out this decree of the senate without delay. Thus prepared, the confederates were awaited.

THE GUEUX.

The members of the senate had not yet dispersed, when all Brussels resounded with the report, that the confederates were approaching the town They consisted of no more than two hundred horse, but rumour greatly exaggerated their numbers. Filled with consternation, the regent consulted with her ministers whether it was best to close the gates on the approaching party, or to seek safety in flight? Both suggestions were rejected as dishonourable; and the peaceable entry of the nobles soon allayed all fears of violence. The first morning after their arrival, they assembled at Kuilemburg house, where Brederode administered to them a second oath, binding them, before all other duties, to stand by one another, and even with arms if necessary. At this meeting, a letter from Spain was produced, in which it was stated, that a certain Protestant, whom they all knew and valued, had been burned alive in that country by a slow fire. After these, and similar preliminaries, he called on them one after another by name, to take the new oath, and renew the old one in their own names and in those of the absent. The next day, the 5th of April, 1566, was fixed for the presentation of the petition. Their numbers now amounted to between 300 and 400. Amongst them were many retainers of the high nobility, as also several servants of the king himself, and of the duchess.

With the Counts of Nassau and Brederode at their head, and formed in ranks of four by four, they advanced in procession to the palace; all Brussels attended the unwonted spectacle in silent astonishment. Here were to be seen a body of men, advancing with too much boldness and confidence to look like supplicants, and led by two men who were not wont to be petitioners; and on the other hand, with so much order and stillness, as do not usually accompany rebellion. The regent received the procession, surrounded by all her counsellors and the Knights of the Fleece. "These noble Netherlanders," thus Brederode respectfully addressed her, "who here present themselves before your highness, wish in their own name, and of many others besides, who are shortly to arrive, to present to you a petition, of whose importance, as well as of their own humility, this solemn procession must convince you. I, as speaker of this body, entreat you to receive our petition, which contains nothing but what is in unison with the laws of our country and the honour of the king."

"If this petition," replied Margaret, "really contains nothing which is at variance either with the good of the country, or with the authority of the king, there is no doubt, that it will be favourably considered." "They had learnt," continued the spokesman, "with indignation and regret, that suspicious objects had been imputed to their association, and that interested parties had endeavoured to prejudice her highness against him, they therefore crave that she would name the authors of so grave an accusation, and compel them to bring their charges publicly, and in due form, in order that he, who should be found guilty, might suffer the punishment of his demerits." "Undoubtedly," replied the regent, "she had received unfavourable rumours of their designs and alliance. She could not be blamed, if, in consequence, she had thought it requisite to call the attention of the governors of the provinces to the matter; but, as to giving up the names of her informants, to betray state secrets," she added, with an appearance of displeasure, "that could not in justice be required of her." She then appointed the next day for answering their petition; and, in the mean time, she proceeded to consult the members of her council upon it.

"Never," (so ran the petition, which, according to some, was drawn up by the celebrated Balduin,) "never had they failed in their loyalty to their king, and nothing now could be farther from their hearts; but they would rather run the risk of incurring the displeasure of their sovereign, than allow him to remain longer in ignorance of the evils with which their native country was menaced, by the forcible introduction of the Inquisition, and the continued enforcement of the edicts They had long remained consoling themselves with the expectation, that a general assembly of the states would be summoned to remedy these grievances; but now that even this hope was extinguished, they held it to be their duty to give timely warning to the regent. They, therefore, entreated her highness to send to Madrid an envoy, well disposed, and fully acquainted with the state and temper of the times, who should endeavour to persuade the king to comply with the demands of the whole nation, and abolish the Inquisition, to revoke the edicts, and in their stead cause new and more humane ones to be drawn up at a general assembly of the states. But, in the mean while, until they could learn the king's decision, they prayed that the edicts and the operations of the Inquisition be suspended." "If," they concluded, "no attention should be paid to their humble request, they took God, the king, the regent and all her counsellors to witness, that they had done their part, and were not responsible for any unfortunate result that might happen."

The following day the confederates, marching in the same order of procession, but in still greater numbers, (Counts Bergen and Kuilemberg having, in the interim, joined them with their adherents,) appeared before the regent, in order to receive her answer. It was written on the margin of the petition, and was to the effect, "that entirely to suspend the Inquisition and the Edicts, even temporarily, was beyond her powers; but in compliance with the wishes of the confederates, she was ready to despatch one of the nobles to the king, in Spain, and also to support their petition with all her influence. In the mean time, she would recommend the inquisitors to administer their office with moderation; but in return, she should expect, on the part of the league, that they should abstain from all acts of violence, and undertake nothing to the prejudice of the Catholic faith." Little as these vague and general promises satisfied the confederates, they were, nevertheless, as much as they could have reasonably expected to gain at first. The granting or refusing of the petition, had nothing to do with the primary object of the league Enough for them at present, that it was once recognised, enough that it was now, as it were, an established body, which by its power and threats might, if necessary, overawe the government. The confederates, therefore, acted quite consistently with their designs, in contenting themselves with this answer. and referring the rest to the good pleasure of the king. As, indeed, the whole pantomime of petitioning had only been invented, to cover the more daring plan of the league, until it should have strength enough to show itself in its true light; they felt that much more depended on their being able to continue this mask, and on the favourable reception of their petition, than on its speedily being granted. In a new memorial, which they delivered three days after, they pressed for an express testimonial from the regent, that they had done no more than their duty, and been guided simply by their zeal for the service of the king. When the duchess evaded a declaration, they even sent a person to repeat this request in a private interview. "Time alone and their future behaviour," she replied to this person, "would enable her to judge of their designs."

The league had its origin in banquets, and a banquet gave it form and perfection. On the very day that the second petition was presented, Brederode entertained the confederates in Kuilemberg house; about 300 guests assembled; intoxication gave them courage, and their audacity rose with their numbers. During the conversation, one of their number happened to remark that he had overheard the Count of Barlaimont whisper in French to the regent, who was seen to turn pale on the delivery of the petitions, that "she need not be afraid of a band of beggars (gueux);" (in fact, the majority of them had by their bad management of their incomes only too well deserved this appellation.) Now, as the very name for their fraternity was the very thing which had most perplexed them, an expression was eagerly caught up, which, while it cloaked the presumption of their enterprise in humility, was at the same time appropriate to them as petitioners. Immediately they drank to one another under this name, and the cry "long live the Gueux!" was accompanied with a general shout of applause. After the cloth had been removed, Brederode appeared with a wallet over his shoulder, similar to that which the vagrant pilgrims and mendicant monks of the time used to carry; and after returning thanks to all for their accession to the league, and boldly assuring them, that he was ready to venture life and limb for every individual present, he drank to the health of the whole company out of a wooden beaker. The cup went round, and every one uttered the same vow, as he set it to his lips. Then one after the other they received the beggar's purse, and each hung it on a nail, which he had appropriated to himself The shouts and uproar attending this buffoonery attracted the Prince of Orange, and Counts Egmont and Horn, who, by chance, were passing the spot at the very moment, and on entering the house were boisterously pressed by Brederode, as host, to remain and drink a glass with them*.

The entrance of three such influential personages renewed the mirth of the guests, and their festivities soon passed the bounds of moderation. Many were intoxicated; guests and attendants mingled together without distinction, the serious and the ludicrous, drunken fancies and affairs of state were blended one with another in a burlesque medley; and the discussions on the general distress of the country ended in the wild uproar of a bacchanalian revel. But it did not stop here; what they had resolved on in the moment of intoxication, they attempted when sober to carry into execution. It was necessary to manifest to the people in some striking shape, the existence of their protectors, and likewise to fan the zeal of the faction by a visible emblem; for this end, nothing could be better than to adopt publicly this name of Gueux, and to borrow from it the tokens of the association. In a few days, the town of Brussels swarmed with ash-grey garments, such as were usually worn by mendicant friars and penitents. Every confederate put his whole family and domestics in this dress. Some carried wooden bowls thinly overlaid with plates of silver, cups of the same kind, and wooden knives; in short, the whole paraphernalia of the beggar tribe, which they either fixed around their hats or suspended from their girdles. Round the neck they wore a golden or silver coin, afterwards called the Geusen penny, of which one side bore the effigy of the king, with the inscription, "True to the king;" on the other side were seen two hands folded together, holding a wallet, with the words, "as far as the beggar's scrip." Hence the origin of the name "Gueux," which was subsequently borne in the Netherlands by all who seceded from popery, and took up arms against the king.

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* "But," Egmont asserted in his written defence, "we drank only one single small glass, and thereupon they cried, "long live the king and the Gueux!" This was the first time that I heard that appellation, and it certainly did not please me. But the times were so bad, that one was often compelled to share in much that was against one's inclination, and I knew not but I was doing an innocent thing." Procés criminels des comtes d'Egmont, etc. 7. 1. Egmont's defence, Hopper, 94. Strada, 127—130. Burgund. 185. 187.

Before the confederates separated and dispersed among the provinces, they presented themselves once more before the duchess, in order to remind her of the necessity of leniency towards the heretics, until the arrival of the king's answer from Spain, if she did not wish to drive the people to extremities. "If, however," they added, "a contrary behaviour should give rise to any evils, they at least must be regarded as having done their duty."

To this, the regent replied, "she hoped to be able to adopt such measures as would render it impossible for disorders to ensue; but if, nevertheless, they did occur, she could ascribe them to no one but the confederates. She, therefore, earnestly admonished them on their part to fulfil their engagements, but especially to receive no new members into the league, to hold no more private assemblies, and generally not to attempt any novel and unconstitutional measures." And in order to tranquillize their minds, she commanded her private secretary, Berti, to show them the letters to the inquisitors and secular judges, wherein they were enjoined to observe moderation towards all those who had not aggravated their heretical offences by any civil crime. Before their departure from Brussels, they named four presidents from among their number, who were to take care of the affairs of the league; and also, particular administrators for each province. A few were left behind in Brussels, to keep a watchful eye on all the movements of the court. Brederode, Kuilemberg, and Bergen, at last quitted the town, attended by 550 horsemen, saluted it once more beyond the walls with a discharge of musketry, and then the three leaders parted; Brederode taking the road to Antwerp, and the two others to Guelders. The regent had sent off an express to Antwerp, to warn the magistrate of that town against him; on his arrival, more than a thousand persons thronged to the hotel where he had taken up his abode. Showing himself at a window, with a full wine-glass in his hand, he thus addressed them: "Citizens of Antwerp! I am here at the hazard of my life and my property, to relieve you from the oppressive burden of the Inquisition. If you are ready to share this enterprise with me, and to acknowledge me as your leader, accept the health which I here drink to you, and hold up your hands in testimony of your approbation." Hereupon he drank to their health, and all hands were raised amidst clamorous shouts of exultation. After this heroic deed he quitted Antwerp.

Immediately after the delivery of the "Petition of the Nobles," the regent had caused a new form of the edicts to be drawn up in the Privy Council, which should keep the mean between the commands of the king and the demands of the confederates But the next question that arose was, to determine whether it would be advisable immediately to promulgate this mitigated form or moderation, as it was commonly called, or to submit it first to the king for his ratification. The Privy Council, who maintained that it would be presumptuous to take a step so important and so contrary to the declared sentiments of the monarch, without having first obtained his sanction, opposed the vote of the Prince of Orange, who supported the former proposition. Besides, they urged there was cause to fear that it would not even content the nation. A "Moderation," devised with the assent of the states, was what they particularly insisted on. In order, therefore, to gain the consent of the states, or rather to obtain it from them by stealth, the regent artfully propounded the question to the provinces singly, and first of all to those which possessed the least freedom, such as Artois, Namur, and Luxemburg. Thus she not only prevented one province encouraging another in opposition, but also gained this advantage by it, that the freer provinces, such as Flanders and Brabant, which were prudently reserved to the last, allowed themselves to be carried away by the example of the others. By a very illegal procedure, the representatives of the towns were taken by surprise, and their consent exacted before they could confer with their constituents, while complete silence was imposed upon them with regard to the whole transaction. By these means the regent obtained the unconditional consent of some of the provinces to the "Moderation."

and, with a few slight changes, that of other provinces. Luxemburg and Namur subscribed it without scruple. The states of Artois simply added the condition, that false informers should be subjected to a retributive penalty; those of Hainault demanded, that instead of confiscation of the estates. which directly militated against their privileges, another discretionary punishment should be introduced. Flanders called for the entire abolition of the Inquisition. and desired that the accused might be secured in right of appeal to their own province. The states of Brabant were outwitted by the intrigues of the court. Zealand, Holland, Utrecht, Guelders, and Friesland, as being provinces which enjoyed the most important privileges, and which, moreover, watched over them with the greatest jealousy, were never asked for their opinion. The provincial courts of judicature had also been required to make a report on the projected amendment of the law, but we may well suppose that it was unfavourable, as it never reached Spain. From the principal clause of this "Moderation," which, however, really deserved its name, we may form a judgment of the general character of the edicts themselves "Sectarian writers," it ran, "the heads and teachers of sects, as also those who conceal heretical meetings, or cause any other public scandal, shall be punished with the gallows, and their estates, where the law of the province permit it, confiscated; but if they abjure their errors, their punishment shall be commuted into decapitation with the sword, and their effects shall be preserved to their families." A cruel snare for parental affection! Less grievous heretics, it was further enacted, shall, if penitent, be pardoned; and if impenitent, shall be compelled to leave the country, without, however, forfeiting their estates, unless by continuing to lead others astray, they deprive themselves of the benefit of this provision. The Anabaptists, however, were expressly excluded from benefiting by this clause; these, if they did not clear themselves by the most thorough repentance, were to forfeit their possessions; and if, on the other hand, they relapsed after penitence, that is, were backsliding heretics, they were to be put to death without mercy. The greater regard for life and property, which is observable in this ordinance as compared with the edicts, and which we might be tempted to ascribe to a change of intention in the Spanish ministry, was nothing more than a compulsory step, extorted by the determined opposition of the nobles. So little, too, were the people in the Netherlands satisfied by this "Moderation," which, fundamentally, did not remove a single abuse, that instead of "Moderation" (mitigation), they indignantly called it "Moorderation," that is, murdering.

After the consent of the states had, in this manner, been extorted from them, the "Moderation" was submitted to the Council of the State, and after receiving their signatures, forwarded to the king, in Spain, in order to receive from his ratification the force of law.

The embassy to Madrid, which had been agreed upon with the confederates, was at the outset entrusted to the Marquis of Bergen *, who, however, from a distrust of the present disposition of the king, which was only too well grounded, and from reluctance to engage alone in so delicate a business, begged for a coadjutor. He obtained one in the Baron of Montigny, who had previously been employed in a similar duty, and had discharged it with high credit. As, however, circumstances had since altered so much, that he had just anxiety as to his present reception in Madrid, for his greater safety, he stipulated with the duchess that she should write to the monarch previously; and that he, with his companion, should, in the mean while, travel slowly enough to give time for the king's answer reaching him en route. His good genius, wished, as it appeared, to save him from the terrible fate which awaited him in Madrid, for his departure was delayed by an unexpected obstacle, the Marquis of Bergen being disabled from setting out immediately, through a wound which he received from the blow of a tennis ball. At last, however, yielding to the pressing importunities of the regent, who was anxious to expedite the business, he set out alone, not as he hoped, to carry the cause of his nation, but to die for it.

In the mean time, the posture of affairs had changed so greatly in the Netherlands, the step which the nobles had recently taken, had so nearly brought on a complete rupture with the government, that it seemed impossible for the Prince

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* This Marquis of Bergen is to be distinguished from Count William of Bergen, who was among the first who subscribed the covenant. Vigl. ad Hopper, Letter VII.

of Orange and his friends to maintain any longer the intermediate and delicate position which they had hitherto held between the country and the court, or to reconcile the contradictory duties to which it gave rise. Great must have been the restraint, which, with their mode of thinking, they had to put on themselves not to take part in this contest; much, too, must their natural love of liberty, their patriotism, and their principles of toleration have suffered from the constraint which their official station imposed upon them. On the other hand, Philip's distrust, the little regard which now for a long time had been paid to their advice, and the marked slights which the duchess publicly put upon them, had greatly contributed to cool their zeal for the service, and to render irksome the longer continuance of a part, which they played with so much repugnance and with so little thanks. This feeling was strengthened by several intimations they received from Spain, which placed beyond doubt the great displeasure of the king at the petition of the nobles, and his little satisfaction with their own behaviour on that occasion, while they were also led to expect that he was about to enter upon measures, to which, as favourable to the liberties of their country, and for the most part friends or blood relations of the confederates, they could never lend their countenance or support. On the name, which should be applied in Spain to the confederacy of the nobles, it principally depended what course they should follow for the future. If the petition should be called rebellion, no alternative would be left them, but either to come prematurely to a dangerous explanation with the court, or to aid it in treating as enemies, those with whom they had both a fellow feeling and a common interest. This perilous alternative could only be avoided by withdrawing entirely from public affairs; this plan they had once before practically adopted, and under present circumstances, it was something more than a simple expedient. The whole nation had their eyes upon them. An unlimited confidence in their integrity, and the universal veneration for their persons, which closely bordered on idolatry, would ennoble the cause which they might make their own, and ruin that which they should abandon. Their share in the administration of the state, though it were nothing more than nominal, kept the opposite party in check; while they attended the senate, violent measures were avoided, because their continued presence still favoured some expectations of succeeding by gentle means. The withholding of their approbation, even if it did not proceed from their hearts, dispirited the faction, which, on the contrary, would exert its full strength so soon as it could reckon even distantly on obtaining so weighty a sanction. The very measures of the government, which, if they came through their hands, were certain of a favourable reception and issue, would without them prove suspected and futile; even the royal concessions, if they were not obtained by the mediation of these friends of the people, would fail of the chief part of their efficacy. Besides, their retirement from public affairs would deprive the regent of the benefit of their advice, at a time, when counsel was most indispensable to her; it would, moreover, leave the preponderance with a party, which blindly dependent on the court, and ignorant of the peculiarities of republican character, would neglect nothing to aggravate the evil, and to drive to extremity the already exasperated mind of the public.

All these motives (and it is open to every one, according to his good or bad opinion of the prince, to say which was the most influential) tended alike to move him to desert the regent, and to divest himself of all share in public affairs. An opportunity for putting this resolve into execution soon presented itself. The prince had voted for the immediate promulgation of the newly revised edicts; but the regent, following the suggestion of her Privy Council, had determined to transmit them first to the king. "I now see clearly," he broke out with well-acted vehemence, "that all the advice which I give is distrusted. The king requires no servants whose loyalty he is determined to doubt; and far be it from me to thrust my services upon a sovereign who is unwilling to receive them. Better, therefore, for him and me, that I withdraw from public affairs." Count Horn expressed himself nearly to the same effect. Egmont requested permission to visit the baths of Aix-la-Chapelle, the use of which had been prescribed to him by his physician, although (as it is stated in his accusation) he appeared health itself The regent, terrified at the consequences which must inevitably follow this step, spoke sharply to the prince. "If neither my representations, nor the general welfare can prevail upon you, so far as to induce you to relinquish this intention, let me advise you to be more careful, at least, of your own reputation. Louis of Nassau is your brother; he and Count Brederode, the heads of the confederacy, have publicly been your guests. The petition is in substance identical with your own representations in the Council of State. If you now suddenly desert the cause of your king, will it not be universally said that you favour the conspiracy?" We do not find it anywhere stated, whether the prince really withdrew at this time from the Council of State; at all events, if he did, he must soon have altered his mind, for shortly after, he appears again in public transactions. Egmont allowed himself to be overcome by the remonstrances of the regent; Horn alone actually withdrew himself to one of his estates *, with the resolution of never more serving either emperor or king. Meanwhile the Gueux had dispersed themselves through the provinces, and spread everywhere the most favourable reports of their success. According to their assertions, religious freedom was finally assured; and in order to confirm their statements, they helped themselves, where the truth failed, with falsehood For example, they produced a forged letter of the Knights of the Fleece, in which the latter were made solemnly to declare that, for the future, no one need fear imprisonment, or banishment, or death, on account of religion, unless he also committed a political crime; and even in that case, the confederates alone were to be his judges; and this regulation was to be in force until the king, with the consent and advice of the states of the realm, should otherwise dispose. Earnestly as the knights applied themselves, upon the first information of the fraud, to rescue the nation from their delusion, still it had already, in this short interval, done good service to the faction. If there are truths whose effect is limited to a single instant, then inventions which last so long can easily assume their place. Besides, the report, however false, was calculated both to awaken distrust between the regent and the knights, and to support the courage of the Protestants by fresh hopes, while it also furnished those who were meditating innovation an appearance of right, which, however unsubstantial they themselves knew it to be, served as a colourable pre

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* Where he remained three months inactive.

text for their proceedings. Quickly as this delusion was dispelled, still, in the short space of time that it obtained belief, it had occasioned so many extravagances, had introduced so much of irregularity and license, that a return to the former state of things became impossible, and continuance in the course already commenced, was rendered necessary as well by habit as by despair. On the very first news of this happy result, the fugitive Protestants had returned to their homes, which they had so unwillingly abandoned; those who had been in concealment came forth from their hiding places; those who had hitherto paid homage to the new religion in their hearts alone, emboldened by these pretended acts of toleration, now gave in their adhesion to it publicly and decidedly. The name of the "Gueux" was extolled in all the provinces; they were called the pillars of religion and liberty; their party increased daily, and many of the merchants began to wear their insignia. The latter made an alteration in the "Gueux" penny, by introducing two travellers' staffs laid crosswise, to intimate that they stood prepared and ready, at any instant, to forsake house and hearth for the sake of religion. The Gueux League, in short, had now given to things an entirely different form. The murmurs of the people, hitherto impotent and despised, as being the cries of individuals, had now, that they were concentrated, become formidable; and had gained power, direction, and firmness, through union. Every one who was rebelliously disposed, now looked on himself as the member of a venerable and powerful body, and believed that by carrying his own complaints to the general stock of discontent, he secured the free expression of them. To be called an important acquisition to the league flattered the vain; to be lost, unnoticed, and irresponsible, in the crowd, was an inducement to the timid. The face which the confederacy showed to the nation, was very unlike that which it had turned to the court. But had its objects been the purest, had it really been as well disposed towards the throne as it wished to appear, still the multitude would have regarded only what was illegal in its proceedings, and upon them its better intentions would have been entirely lost.

PUBLIC PREACHING.

No moment could be more favourable to the Huguenots and the German Protestants than the present, to seek a market for their dangerous commodity in the Netherlands. Accordingly, every considerable town now swarmed with suspicious arrivals, masked spies, and the apostles of every description of heresy. Of the religious parties which had sprung up by secession from the ruling church, three chiefly had made considerable progress in the provinces. Friesland, and the adjoining districts, were overrun by the Anabaptists, who, however, as the most indigent, without organization and government, destitute of military resources, and moreover at strife amongst themselves, awakened the least apprehension. Of far more importance were the Calvinists, who prevailed in the southern provinces, and above all in Flanders, who were powerfully supported by their neighbours the Huguenots, the republic of Geneva, the Swiss Cantons, and part of Germany, and whose opinions, with the exception of a slight difference, were also held by the throne in England. They were also the most numerous party, especially amongst the merchants and common citizens. The Huguenots expelled from France had been the chief disseminators of the tenets of this party. The Lutherans were inferior both in numbers and wealth, but derived weight from having many adherents among the nobility. They occupied, for the most part, the eastern portion of the Netherlands, which borders on Germany, and were also to be found in some of the northern territories. Some of the most powerful princes of Germany were their allies; and the religious freedom of that empire, of which by the Burgundian treaty the Netherlands formed an integral part, was claimed by them with some appearance of right. These three religious denominations met together in Antwerp, where the crowded population concealed them, and the mingling of all nations favoured liberty. They had nothing in common, except an equally inextinguishable hatred of Popery, of the Inquisition in particular, and of the Spanish government, whose instrument it was; while, on the other hand, they watched each other with a jealousy which kept their zeal in exercise, and prevented the glowing ardour of fanaticism from waxing dull.

The regent, in expectation that the projected "Moderation" would be sanctioned by the king, had, in the mean time, to gratify the Gueux, recommended the governors and municipal officers of the provinces to be as moderate as possible in their proceedings against heretics; instructions which were eagerly followed, and interpreted in the widest sense by the majority, who had hitherto administered the painful duty of punishment with extreme repugnance. Most of the chief magistrates were in their hearts averse to the Inquisition and the Spanish tyranny, and many were even secretly attached to one or other of the religious parties; even the others were unwilling to inflict punishment on their countrymen, to gratify their sworn enemies, the Spaniards. All, therefore, purposely misunderstood the regent, and allowed the Inquisition and the edicts to fall almost entirely into disuse. This forbearance of the government, combined with the brilliant representations of the Gueux, lured from their obscurity the Protestants, who, however, had now grown too powerful to be any longer concealed. Hitherto they had contented themselves with secret assemblies by night; now they thought themselves numerous and formidable enough to venture to these meetings openly and publicly. This license commenced somewhere between Oudenarde and Ghent, and soon spread through the rest of Flanders. A certain Hermann Stricker, born at Overyssel, formerly a monk, a daring enthusiast, of able mind, imposing figure, and ready tongue, was the first who collected the people for a sermon in the open air The novelty of the thing gathered together a crowd of about 7,000 persons. A magistrate of the neighbourhood, more courageous than wise, rushed amongst the crowd with his drawn sword, and attempted to seize the preacher, but was so roughly handled by the multitude, who for want of other weapons took up stones, and felled him to the ground, that he was glad to beg for his life *.

This success of the first attempt inspired courage for a second. In the vicinity of Aalst, they assembled again in still

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* The unheard-of foolhardiness of a single man rushing into the midst o a fanatical crowd of 7,000 people, to seize before their eyes one whom they adored, proves, more than all that can be said on the subject, the insolent contempt with which the Roman Catholics of the time looked down upon the so-called heretics as an inferior race of beings.

greater numbers; but on this occasion they provided themselves with rapiers, fire arms, and halberds, placed sentries at all the approaches, which they also barricaded with carts and carriages. All passers by were obliged, whether willing or otherwise, to take part in the religious service, and to enforce this object, look-out parties were posted at certain distances round the place of meeting. At the entrance, booksellers stationed themselves, offering for sale Protestant catechisms, religious tracts, and pasquinades on the bishops. The preacher, Hermann Stricker, held forth from a pulpit, which was hastily constructed for the occasion out of carts and trunks of trees. A canvass awning drawn over it protected him from the sun and the rain; the preacher's position was in the quarter of the wind that the people might not lose any part of his sermon, which consisted principally of revilings against Popery. Here the sacraments were administered after the Calvinistic fashion, and water was procured from the nearest river to baptize infants without further ceremony, after the practice, it was pretended, of the earliest times of Christianity. Couples were also united in wedlock, and the marriage ties dissolved between others. To be present at this meeting, half the population of Ghent had left its gates; their example was soon followed in other parts, and ere long spread over the whole of East Flanders. In like manner, Peter Dathen, another renegade monk, from Poperingen, stirred up West Flanders; as many as 15,000 persons at a time attended his preaching from the villages and hamlets; their number made them bold, and they broke into the prisons, where some Anabaptists were reserved for martyrdom. In Tournay, the Protestants were excited to a similar pitch of daring by Ambrosius Ville, a French Calvinist. They demanded the release of the prisoners of their sect, and repeatedly threatened, if their demands were not complied with, to deliver up the town to the French It was entirely destitute of a garrison, for the commandant, from fear of treason, had withdrawn it into the castle, and the soldiers, moreover, refused to act against their fellow citizens. The sectarians carried their audacity to such great lengths, as to require one of the churches within the town to be assigned to them; and when this was refused, they entered into a league with Valenciennes and Antwerp, to obtain a legal recognition of their worship, after the example of the other towns, by open force. These three towns maintained a close connexion with each other, and the Protestant party was equally powerful in all. While, however, no one would venture singly to commence the disturbance, they agreed simultaneously to make a beginning with public preaching. Brederode's appearance in Antwerp at last gave them courage. Six thousand persons, men and women, poured forth from the town on an appointed day, on which the same thing happened in Tournay and Valenciennes. The place of meeting was closed in with a line of vehicles, firmly fastened together, and behind them armed men were secretly posted, with a view to protect the service from any surprise. Of the preachers, most of whom were men of the very lowest class—some were Germans, some were Huguenots—and spoke in the Walloon dialect; some even of the citizens felt themselves called upon to take a part in this sacred work, now that no fears of the officers of justice alarmed them. Many were drawn to the spot by mere curiosity, to hear what kind of new and unheard-of doctrines these foreign teachers, whose arrival had caused so much talk, would set forth. Others were attracted by the melody of the psalms, which were sung in a French version, after the custom in Geneva. A great number came to hear these sermons as so many amusing comedies: such was the buffoonery with which the pope, the fathers of the ecclesiastical Council of Trent, purgatory, and other dogmas of the ruling church were abused in them. And, in fact, the more extravagant was this abuse and ridicule, the more it tickled the ears of the lower orders, and a universal clapping of hands, as in a theatre, rewarded the speaker who had surpassed others in the wildness of his jokes and denunciations. But the ridicule which was thus cast upon the ruling church was, nevertheless, not entirely lost on the minds of the hearers, as neither were the few grains of truth or reason, which occasionally slipped in among it; and many a one, who had sought from these sermons anything but conviction, unconsciously carried away a little also of it.

These assemblies were several times repeated, and each day augmented the boldness of the sectarians; till at last they even ventured, after concluding the service, to conduct their preachers home in triumph, with an escort of armed horsemen, and ostentatiously to brave the law. The town council sent express after express to the duchess, entreating her to visit them in person, and if possible to reside for a short time in Antwerp, as the only expedient to curb the arrogance of the populace; and assuring her that the most eminent merchants, afraid of being plundered, were already preparing to quit it. Fear of staking the royal dignity on so hazardous a stroke of policy, forbade her compliance; but she despatched in her stead Count Megen, in order to treat with the magistrate for the introduction of a garrison. The rebellious mob, who quickly got an inkling of the object of his visit, gathered around him with tumultuous cries, shouting—"He was known to them as a sworn enemy of the Gueux; that it was notorious he was bringing upon them prisons, and the Inquisition, and that he should leave the town instantly." Nor was the tumult quieted, till Megen was beyond the gates. The Calvinists now handed in to the magistrate a memorial, in which they showed that their great numbers made it impossible for them henceforward to assemble in secrecy, and requested a separate place of worship to be allowed them inside the town. The town council renewed its entreaties to the duchess to assist, by her personal presence, their perplexities, or at least to send to them the Prince of Orange, as the only person for whom the people still had any respect; and moreover, as specially bound to the town of Antwerp by his hereditary title of its Burgrave. In order to escape the greater evil, she was compelled to consent to the second demand, however much against her inclination to entrust Antwerp to the prince. After allowing himself to be long and fruitlessly entreated, for he had all at once resolved to take no farther share in public affairs, he yielded at last to the earnest persuasions of the regent, and the boisterous wishes of the people. Brederode, with a numerous retinue, came half a mile out of the town to meet him, and both parties saluted each other with a discharge of pistols. Antwerp appeared to have poured out all her inhabitants to welcome her deliverer. The high road swarmed with multitudes; the roofs were taken off the houses, in order that they might accommodate more spectators; behind fences, from churchyard walls, even out of graves started up men

The attachment of the people to the prince shewed itself in childish effusions. "Long live the Gueux!" was the shout with which young and old received him. "Behold," cried others, "the man who shall give us liberty." "He brings us," cried the Lutherans, "the Confession of Augsburg!" "We don't want the Gueux now!" exclaimed others; "we have no more need of the troublesome journey to Brussels. He alone is every thing to us!" Those who knew not what to say, vented their extravagant joy in psalms, which they vociferously chanted as they moved along. He, however, maintained his gravity, beckoned for silence, and at last, when no one would listen to him, exclaimed with indignation, half real and half affected—"By God, they ought to consider what they did, or they would one day repent what they had now done." The shouting increased even as he rode into the town. The first conference of the prince with the heads of the different religious sects, whom he sent for and separately interrogated, presently convinced him that the chief source of the evil was the mutual distrust of the several parties, and the suspicions which the citizens entertained of the designs of the government; and that, therefore, it must be his first business to restore confidence among them all. First of all he attempted, both by persuasion and artifice, to induce the Calvinists, as the most numerous body, to lay down their weapons, and in this he at last, with much labour, succeeded. When, however, some wagons were soon afterwards seen laden with ammunition in Malines, and the High Bailiff of Brabant showed himself frequently in the neighbourhood of Antwerp with an armed force, the Calvinists fearing hostile interruption of their religious worship, besought the prince to allot them a place within the walls for their sermons, which should be secure from a surprise. He succeeded once more in pacifying them, and his presence fortunately prevented an outbreak on the Assumption of the Virgin, which, as usual, had drawn a crowd to the town, and from whose sentiments there was but too much reason for alarm. The image of the Virgin was, with the usual pomp, carried round the town without interruption a few words of abuse, and a suppressed murmur about idolatry, was all that the disapproving multitudes indulged in against the procession.

1566. While the regent received from one province after another the most melancholy accounts of the excesses of the Protestants, and while she trembled for Antwerp, which she was compelled to leave in the dangerous hands of the Prince of Orange, a new terror assailed her from another quarter. Upon the first authentic tidings of the public preaching, she immediately called upon the league to fulfil its promises, and to assist her in restoring order. Count Brederode used this pretext to summon a general meeting of the whole league, for which he could not have selected a more dangerous moment than the present. So ostentatious a display of the strength of the league, whose existence and protection had alone encouraged the Protestant mob to go the length it had already gone, would now raise the confidence of the sectarians, while, in the same degree, it depressed the courage of the regent. The convention took place in the town of Liege St. Truyen, into which Brederode and Louis of Nassau had thrown themselves at the head of 2,000 confederates. As the long delay of the royal answer from Madrid seemed to presage no good from that quarter, they considered it advisable, in any case, to extort from the regent a letter of indemnity for their persons.

Those among them who were conscious of a disloyal sympathy with the Protestant mob, looked on its licentiousness as a favourable circumstance for the league; the apparent success of those to whose degrading fellowship they had deigned to stoop, led them to alter their tone; their former laudable zeal began to degenerate into insolence and defiance. Many thought that they ought to avail themselves of the general confusion and the perplexity of the duchess, to assume a bolder tone and heap demand upon demand. The Roman Catholic members of the league, among whom many were, in their hearts, still strongly inclined to the royal cause, and who had been drawn into a connexion with the league by occasion and example, rather than from feeling and conviction, now heard, to their astonishment, propositions for establishing universal freedom of religion, and were not a little shocked to discover in how perilous an enterprise they had hastily implicated themselves. On this discovery, the young Count Mansfeld withdrew immediately from it, and internal dissensions already began to undermine the work of precipitation and haste, and imperceptibly to loosen the joints of the league.

Count Egmont and William of Orange were empowered by the regent to treat with the confederates. Twelve of the latter, among whom were Louis of Nassau, Brederode, and Kuilemberg, conferred with them in Duffle, a village near Malines. "Wherefore this new step?" demanded the regent by the mouth of these two noblemen. "I was required to despatch ambassadors to Spain; and I sent them. The edicts and the Inquisition were complained of as too rigorous; I have rendered both more lenient. A general assembly of the states of the realm was proposed; I have submitted this request to the king, because I could not grant it from my own authority. What, then, have I unwittingly either omitted or done, that should render necessary this assembling in St. Truyen? Is it perhaps fear of the king's anger, and of its consequences, that disturbs the confederates? The provocation certainly is great, but his mercy is even greater. Where now is the promise of the league, to excite no disturbances amongst the people? Where those high-sounding professions, that they were ready to die at my feet, rather than offend against any of the prerogatives of the crown? The innovators already venture on things which border closely on rebellion, and threaten the state with destruction; and it is to the league that they appeal. If it continues silently to tolerate this, it will justly bring on itself the charge of participating in the guilt of their offences; if it is honestly disposed towards the sovereign, it cannot remain longer inactive in this licentiousness of the mob. But, in truth, does it not itself outstrip the insane population by its dangerous example, concluding, as it is known to do, alliances with the enemies of the country, and confirming the evil report of its designs by the present illegal meeting?"

Against these reproaches the league formally justified itself, in a memorial which it deputed three of its members to deliver to the Council of State at Brussels.

"All," it commenced, "that your highness has done in respect to our petition we have felt with the most lively gratitude; and we cannot complain of any new measure subsequently adopted, inconsistent with your promise; but we cannot help coming to the conclusion that the orders of your highness are, by the judicial courts at least, very little regarded: for we are continually hearing—and our own eyes attest to the truth of the report—that in all quarters our fellow citizens are, in spite of the orders of your highness, still mercilessly dragged before the courts of justice, and condemned to death for religion. What the league engaged on its part to do, it has honestly fulfilled; it has, too, to the utmost of its power, endeavoured to prevent the public preachings; but it certainly is no wonder if the long delay of an answer from Madrid fills the mind of the people with distrust, and if the disappointed hopes of a general assembly of the states disposes them to put little faith in any further assurances. The league has never allied, nor ever felt any temptation to ally, itself with the enemies of the country If the arms of France were to appear in the provinces, we, the confederates, would be the first to mount and drive them back again. The league, however, desires to be candid with your highness. We thought we read marks of displeasure in your countenance; we see men in exclusive possession of your favour, who are notorious for their hatred against us. We daily hear that persons are warned from associating with us, as with those infected with the plague, while we are denounced with the arrival of the king, as with the opening of a day of judgment—what is more natural, than that such distrust shown to us, should at last rouse our own? That the attempt to blacken our league with the reproach of treason, that the warlike preparations of the Duke of Savoy and of other princes, which, according to common report, are directed against ourselves; the negociations of the king with the French court, to obtain a passage through that kingdom for a Spanish army, which is destined, it is said, for the Netherlands—what wonder if these, and similar occurrences, should have stimulated us to think in time of the means of self-defence, and to strengthen ourselves by an alliance with our friends beyond the frontier? On a general, uncertain, and vague rumour, we are accused of a share in this licentiousness of the Protestant mob; but who is safe from general rumour? True it is, certainly, that of our numbers some are Protestants, to whom religious toleration would be a welcome boon; but even they have never forgotten what they owe to their sovereign. It is not fear of the king's anger which instigated us to hold this assembly. The king is good, and we still hope that he is also just. It cannot, therefore, be pardon that we seek from him, and just as little can it be oblivion, that we solicit for our actions, which are far from being the least considerable of the services we have at different times rendered his majesty. Again, it is true, that the delegates of the Lutherans and Calvinists are with us in St. Truyen; nay, more, they have delivered to us a petition which, annexed to this memorial, we here present to your highness. In it they offer to go unarmed to their preachings, if the league will tender its security to them, and be willing to engage for a general meeting of the states. We have thought it incumbent upon us to communicate both these matters to you, for our guarantee can have no force, unless it is at the same time confirmed by your highness and some of your principal counsellors. Among these, no one can be so well acquainted with the circumstances of our cause, or be so upright in intention towards us, as the Prince of Orange, and Counts Horn and Egmont We gladly accept these three as mediators, if the necessary powers are given to them, and assurance is afforded us, that no troops will be enlisted without their knowledge. This guarantee, however, we only require for a given period, before the expiration of which it will rest with the king, whether he will cancel or confirm it for the future. If the first should be his will, it will then be but fair that time should be allowed us to place our persons and our property in security; for this, three weeks will be sufficient. Finally, and in conclusion, we on our part also pledge ourselves to undertake nothing new, without the concurrence of those three persons, our mediators."

The league would not have ventured to hold such bold language, if it had not reckoned on powerful support and protection; but the regent was as little in a condition to concede their demands, as she was incapable of vigorously opposing them. Deserted in Brussels by most of her counsellors of state, who had either departed to their provinces, or under some pretext or other had altogether withdrawn from public affairs; destitute as well of advisers as of money, (the latter want had compelled her, in the first instance, to appeal to the liberality of the clergy, when this proved insufficient, to have recourse to a lottery,) dependent on orders from Spain, which were ever expected and never received, she was at last reduced to the degrading expedient of entering into a negociation with the confederates in St. Truyen, that they should wait twenty-four days longer for the king's resolution, before they took any further steps. It was certainly surprising, that the king still continued to delay a decisive answer to the petition, although it was universally known that he had answered letters of a much later date, and that the regent earnestly importuned him on this head. She had also, on the commencement of the public preaching, immediately despatched the Marquis of Bergen after the Baron of Montigny, who, as an eyewitness of these new occurrences, could confirm her written statements, to move the king to an earlier decision.

1566. In the meanwhile, the Flemish Ambassador, Florence of Montigny, had arrived in Madrid, where he was received with a great show of consideration. His instructions were to press for the abolition of the Inquisition, and the mitigation of the edicts; the augmentation of the Council of State, and the incorporation with it of the two other councils; the calling of a general assembly of the states, and, lastly, to urge the solicitations of the regent for a personal visit from the king. As the latter, however, was only desirous of gaining time, Montigny was put off with fair words until the arrival of his coadjutor, without whom the king was not willing to come to any final determination. In the mean time, Montigny had, every day and at any hour that he desired, an audience with the king, who also commanded, that on all occasions the despatches of the duchess and the answers to them should be communicated to himself. He was, too, frequently admitted to the council for Belgian affairs, where he never omitted to call the king's attention to the necessity of a general assembly of the states, as being the only means of successfully meeting the troubles which had arisen, and as likely to supersede the necessity of any other measure He moreover impressed upon him, that a general and unreserved indemnity for the past would alone eradicate the distrust, which was the source of all existing complaints, and would always counteract the good effects of every measure, however well advised. He ventured, from a thorough acquaintance with circumstances and accurate knowledge of the character of his countrymen, to pledge himself to the king for their inviolable loyalty, as soon as they should be convinced of the honesty of his intentions by the straightforwardness of his proceedings; while, on the contrary, he assured him that there would be no hopes of it, as long as they were not relieved of the fear of being made the victims of the oppression, and sacrificed to the envy, of the Spanish nobles. At last, Montigny's coadjutor made his appearance, and the objects of their embassy were made the subject of repeated deliberations.

1566. The king was at that time at his palace at Segovia, where also he assembled his State Council. The members were: the Duke of Alva; Don Gomez de Figueroa; the Count of Feria; Don Antonio of Toledo, Grand Commander of St. John; Don John Manriquez of Lara, Lord Steward to the Queen; Ruy Gomez, Prince of Eboli and Count of Melito; Louis of Quixada, Master of the Horse to the Prince; Charles Tyssenacque, President of the Council for the Netherlands; Hopper, State Counsellor and Keeper of the Seal; and State Counsellor Corteville. The sitting of the council was protracted for several days; both ambassadors were in attendance, but the king was not himself present. Here, then, the conduct of the Belgian nobles was examined by Spanish eyes; step by step it was traced back to the most distant source; circumstances were brought into relation with others which, in reality, never had any connexion; and what had been the offspring of the moment, was made out to be a well-matured and far-sighted plan. All the different transactions and attempts of the nobles which had been governed solely by chance, and to which the natural order of events alone assigned their particular shape and succession, were said to be the result of a preconcerted scheme, for introducing universal liberty in religion, and for placing all the power of the state in the hands of the nobles. The first step to this end was, it was said, the violent expulsion of the minister Granvella, against whom nothing could be charged, except that he was in possession of an authority, which they preferred to exercise themselves. The second step was sending Count Egmont to Spain, to urge the abolition of the Inquisition, and the mitigation of the penal statutes, and to prevail on the king to consent to an augmentation of the Council of State. As, however, this could not be surreptitiously obtained in so quiet a manner, the attempt was made to extort it from the court by a third and more daring step—by a formal conspiracy, the League of the Gueux. The fourth step to the same end was the present embassy, which at length boldly cast aside the mask, and by the insane proposals which they were not ashamed to make to their king, clearly brought to light the object to which all the preceding steps had tended. Could the abolition of the Inquisition, they exclaimed, lead to any thing less than a complete freedom of belief? Would not the guiding helm of conscience be lost with it? Did not the proposed "moderation" introduce an absolute impunity for all heresies? What was the project of augmenting the Council of State and of suppressing the two other councils, but a complete remodelling of the government of the country in favour of the nobles?—a general constitution for all the provinces of the Netherlands? Again, what was this compact of the ecclesiastics in their public preachings, but a third conspiracy, entered into with the very same objects which the league of the nobles in the Council of State, and that of the Gueux, had failed to effect?

However, it was confessed, that whatever might be the source of the evil, it was not on that account the less important and imminent. The immediate personal presence of the king in Brussels was, indubitably, the most efficacious means, speedily and thoroughly to remedy it. As, however, it was already so late in the year, and the preparations alone for the journey would occupy the short time which was to elapse before the winter set in; as the stormy season of the year, as well as the danger from French and English ships which rendered the sea unsafe, did not allow of the king's taking the northern route, which was the shorter of the two; as the rebels themselves meanwhile might become possessed of the island of Walcheren, and oppose the landing of the king; for all these reasons, the journey was not to be thought of before the spring, and in absence of the only complete remedy it was necessary to rest satisfied with a partial expedient. The council, therefore, agreed to propose to the king, in the first place, that he should recall the Papal Inquisition from the provinces and rest satisfied with that of the bishops;

in the second place, that a new plan for the mitigation of the edicts should be projected, by which the honour of religion and of the king would be better preserved than it had been in the transmitted "moderation;" thirdly, that in order to re assure the minds of the people, and to leave no means un tried, the king should impart to the regent full powers to extend free grace and pardon to all those who had not already committed any heinous crime, or who had not as yet been condemned by any judicial process; but from the benefit of this indemnity, the preachers, and all who harboured them, were to be excepted. On the other hand, all leagues, associations, public assemblies, and preachings, were to be henceforth prohibited under heavy penalties; if, however, this prohibition should be infringed, the regent was to be at liberty to employ the regular troops and garrisons for the forcible reduction of the refractory, and also, in case of necessity, to enlist new troops, and to name the commanders over them, according as should be deemed advisable. Finally, it would have a good effect, if his majesty would write to the most eminent towns, prelates, and leaders of the nobility, to some in his own hand, and to all in a gracious tone, in order to stimulate their zeal in his service.

When this resolution of his Council of State was submitted to the king, his first measure was to command public processions and prayers in all the most considerable places of the kingdom, and also of the Netherlands, imploring the divine guidance in his decision. He appeared in his own person in the Council of State in order to approve this resolution, and render it effective. He declared the General Assembly of the States to be useless, and entirely abolished it. He, however, bound himself to retain some German regiments in his pay, and that they might serve with the more zeal, to pay them their long-standing arrears. He commanded the regent, in a private letter, to prepare secretly for war; three thousand horse and ten thousand infantry were to be assembled by her in Germany, to which end he furnished her with the necessary letters, and transmitted to her a sum of three hundred thousand gold florins. He also accompanied this resolution with several autograph letters to some private individuals and towns, in which he thanked them in the most gracious terms for the zeal which they had already displayed in his service, and called upon them to manifest the same for the future. Notwithstanding that he was inexorable on the most important point, and the very one on which the nation most particularly insisted—the convocation of the states, notwithstanding that his limited and ambiguous pardon was as good as none, and depended too much on arbitrary will to calm the public mind; notwithstanding, in fine, that he rejected, as too lenient, the proposed "moderation," but which, on the part of the people, was complained of as too severe; still he had this time made an unwonted step in the favour of the nation; he had sacrificed to it the Papal Inquisition and left only the Episcopal, to which it was accustomed. The nation had found more equitable judges in the Spanish council than they could reasonably have hoped for. Whether, at another time, and under other circumstances, this wise concession would have had the desired effect, we will not pretend to say It came too late: when (1566) the royal letters reached Brussels, the attack on images had already commenced

BOOK IV

The springs of this extraordinary occurrence are plainly not to be sought for so far back as many historians affect to trace them. It is certainly possible, and very probable that the French Protestants did industriously exert themselves to raise in the Netherlands a nursery for their religion, and to prevent, by all means in their power, an amicable adjustment of differences between their brethren in the faith in that quarter and the King of Spain, in order to give that implacable foe of their party enough to do in his own country. It is natural, therefore, to suppose that their agents in the provinces left nothing undone to encourage their oppressed brethren with daring hopes, to nourish their animosity against the ruling church, and by exaggerating the oppression under which they sighed, to hurry them imperceptibly into illegal courses. It is possible, too, that there were many among the confederates who thought to help out their own lost cause by increasing the number of their partners in guilt; who thought they could not otherwise maintain the legal character of their league, unless the unfortunate results, against which they had warned the king, really came to pass; and who hoped in the general guilt of all to conceal their own individual criminality.

It is, however, incredible that the outbreak of the Iconoclasts was the fruit of a deliberate plan, preconcerted, as it is alleged, at the convent of St. Truyen. It does not seem likely, that in a solemn assembly of so many nobles and warriors, of whom the greater part were the adherents of popery, an individual should be found insane enough to propose an act of positive infamy, which did not so much injure any religious party in particular, as rather tread under foot all respect for religion in general, and even all morality too, and which could have been conceived only in the mind of the vilest reprobate. Besides, this outrage was too sudden in its outbreak, too vehement in its execution altogether, too monstrous to have been any thing more than the offspring of the moment in which it saw the light, it seemed to flow so naturally from the circumstances which preceded it, that it does not require to be traced far back to remount to its origin.

A rude mob, consisting of the very dregs of the populace, rendered brutal by harsh treatment, by sanguinary decrees which dogged them in every town, scared from place to place, and driven almost to despair, were compelled to worship their God, and to hide, like a work of darkness, the universal sacred privilege of humanity. Before their eyes proudly rose the temples of the dominant church, in which their haughty brethren indulged in ease their magnificent devotion, while they themselves were driven from the walls, expelled, too, by the weaker number perhaps, and forced, here in the wild woods, under the burning heat of noon, in disgraceful secrecy to worship the same God—cast out from civil society into a state of nature, and reminded, in one dread moment, of the rights of that state! The greater their superiority of numbers, the more unnatural did their lot appear—with wonder they perceive the truth. The free heaven, the arms lying ready, the frenzy in their brains and fury in their hearts combine to aid the suggestions of some preaching fanatic; the occasion calls, no premeditation is necessary, where all eyes at once declare consent; the resolution is formed ere yet the word is scarcely uttered; ready for any unlawful act, no one yet clearly knows what, the furious band rushes onwards. The smiling prosperity of the hostile religion insults the poverty of their own; the pomp of the authorized temples casts contempt on their proscribed belief·

every cross set up upon the highway, every image of tho saints that they meet, is a trophy erected over their humiliation, and they all must be removed by their avenging hands. Fanaticism suggests these detestable proceedings, but base passions carry them into execution,

1566 The commencement of the attack on images took place in West Flanders and Artois, in the districts between Lys and the sea. A frantic herd of artisans, boatmen, and peasants, mixed with prostitutes, beggars, vagabonds, and thieves, about 300 in number, furnished with clubs, axes, hammers, ladders, and cords, (a few only were provided with swords or fire-arms,) cast themselves, with fanatical fury, into the villages and hamlets near St. Omer, and breaking open the gates of such churches and cloisters as they find locked, overthrow everywhere the altars, break to pieces the images of the saints, and trample them under foot. With their excitement increased by its indulgence, and reinforced by new comers, they press on, by the direct road, to Ypres, where they can count on the support of a strong body of Calvinists. Unopposed, they break into the cathedral, and mounting on ladders, they hammer to pieces the pictures, hew down with axes the pulpits and pews, despoil the altars of their ornaments, and steal the holy vessels. This example was quickly followed in Menin, Comines, Verrich, Lille, and Oudenard; in a few days, the same fury spreads through the whole of Flanders. At the very time, when the first tidings of this occurrence arrived, Antwerp was swarming with a crowd of houseless people, which the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin had brought together in that city. Even the presence of the Prince of Orange was hardly sufficient to restrain the licentious mob, who burned to imitate the doings of their brethren in St. Omer; but an order from the court, which summoned him to Brussels, where the regent was just assembling her Council of State, in order to lay before them the royal letters, obliged him to abandon Antwerp to the outrages of this band. His departure was the signal for tumult Apprehensive of the lawless violence, of which, on the very first day of the festival, the mob had given indications in derisory allusions, the priests, after carrying about tho image of the Virgin for a short time, brought it for safety to the choir, without, as formerly. setting it up in the middle of the church. This incited some mischievous boys from among the people, to pay it a visit there, and jokingly inquire, why she had so soon absented herself from among them? Others mounting the pulpit mimicked the preacher, and challenged the Papists to a dispute. A Roman Catholic waterman, indignant at this jest, attempted to pull them down, and blows were exchanged in the preacher's seat. Similar scenes occurred on the following evening. The numbers increased, and many came already provided with suspicious implements and secret weapons. At last it came into the head of one of them to cry, "Long live the Gueux!" immediately the whole band took up the cry, and the image of the Virgin was called upon to do the same. The few Roman Catholics who were present, and who had given up the hope of effecting anything against these desperadoes, left the church, after locking all the doors except one. So soon as they found themselves alone, it was proposed to sing one of the psalms in the new version, which was prohibited by the government While they were yet singing, they all, as at a given signal, rushed furiously upon the image of the Virgin, piercing it with swords and daggers, and striking off its head; thieves and prostitutes tore the great wax-lights from the altar, and lighted them to the work. The beautiful organ of the church, a masterpiece of the art of that period, was broken to pieces, all the paintings were effaced; the statues smashed to atoms A crucifix, the size of life, which was set up between the two thieves opposite the high altar, an ancient and highly valued piece of workmanship, was pulled to the ground with cords, and cut to pieces with axes, while the two malefactors at its side were respectfully spared. The holy wafers were strewed on the ground and trodden under foot; in the wine used for the Lord's Supper, which was accidentally found there, the health of the Gueux was drunk; while with the holy oil they rubbed their shoes. The very tombs were opened, and the half-decayed corpses torn up and trampled on. All this was done with as much wonderful regularity, as if each had previously had his part assigned to him; every one worked into his neighbour's hands; no one, dangerous as the work was, met with injury; in the midst of thick darkness, which the tapers only served to render more sensible, with heavy masses falling on all sides, and though on the very topmost steps of the ladders, they scuffled with each other for the honours of demolition—yet no one suffered the least injury. In spite of the many tapers which lighted them below in their villanous work, not a single individual was recognised. With incredible rapidity was the dark deed accomplished; a number of men, at most a hundred, despoiled in a few hours a temple of seventy altars—after St. Peter's at Rome, perhaps. the largest and most magnificent in Christendom.

The devastation of the cathedral did not content them. with torches and tapers purloined from it, they set out at midnight to perform a similar work of havoc on the remaining churches, cloisters, and chapels. The destructive hordes increased with every fresh exploit of infamy, and thieves were allured by the opportunity. They carried away whatever they found of value, the consecrated vessels, altar-cloths, money, and vestments; in the cellars of the cloisters they drank to intoxication; to escape greater indignities, the monks and nuns abandoned every thing to them. The confused noises of these riotous acts had startled the citizens from their first sleep; but night made the danger appear more alarming than it really was, and instead of hastening to defend their churches, the citizens fortified themselves in their houses, and in terror and anxiety awaited the dawn of morning. The rising sun at length revealed the devastation which had been going on during the night; but the havoc did not terminate with the darkness. Some churches and cloisters still remained uninjured; the same fate soon overtook them also. The work of destruction lasted three whole days. Alarmed at last, lest the frantic mob, when it could no longer find anything sacred to destroy, should make a similar attack on lay property, and plunder their warehouses; and encouraged, too, by discovering how small was the number of the depredators, the wealthier citizens ventured to show themselves in arms at the doors of their houses. All the gates of the town were locked but one, through which the Iconoclasts brake forth to renew the same atrocities in the rural districts. On one occasion only, during all this time, did the municipal officers venture to exert their authority; so strongly were they held in awe by the superior power of the Calvinists, by whom, as it was believed, this mob of miscreants was hired. The injury inflicted by this work of devastation was incalculable. In the church of the Virgin, it was estimated at not less than 400,000 gold florins. Many precious works of art were destroyed; many valuable manuscripts; many monuments of importance to history and to diplomacy were thereby lost. The city magistrate ordered the plundered articles to be restored on pain of death; in enforcing this restitution, he was effectually assisted by the preachers of the Reformers, who blushed for their followers. Much was in this manner recovered, and the ringleaders of the mob, less animated, perhaps, by the desire of plunder, than by fanaticism and revenge, or perhaps being ruled by some unseen head, resolved, for the future, to guard against these excesses, and to make their attacks in regular bands and in better order.

The town of Ghent, meanwhile, trembled for a like destiny. Immediately on the first news of the outbreak of the Iconoclasts in Antwerp, the magistrate of the latter town, with the most eminent citizens, had bound themselves to repel by force the church-spoilers; when this oath was proposed to the commonalty also, the voices were divided, and many declared openly, that they were by no means disposed to hinder so devout a work. In this state of affairs, the Roman Catholic clergy found it advisable to deposit in the citadel the most precious moveables of their churches, and private families were permitted, in like manner, to provide for the safety of offerings which had been made by their ancestors. Meanwhile, all the services were discontinued, the courts of justice were closed; and like a town in momentary danger of being stormed by the enemy, men trembled in expectation of what was to come. At last, an insane band of rioters ventured to send delegates to the governor, with this impudent message: "They were ordered," they said, "by their chiefs, to take the images out of the churches, as had been done in the other towns. If they were not opposed, it should be done quietly, and with as little injury as possible, but otherwise they would storm the churches;" nay, they went so far in their audacity, as to ask the aid of the officers of justice therein. At first, the magistrate was astounded at this demand; upon reflection, however, and in the hope that the presence of the officers of law would perhaps restrain their excesses, he did not scruple to grant their request.

In Tournay, the churches were despoiled of their ornaments within sight of the garrison, who could not be induced to march against the Iconoclasts. As the latter had been told that the gold and silver vessels, and other ornaments of the church, were buried underground, they turned up the whole floor, and exposed, among others, the body of the Duke Adolph of Gueldres, who fell in battle at the head of the rebellious burghers of Ghent, and had been buried here in Tournay. This Adolph had waged war against his father, and had dragged the vanquished old man some miles barefoot to prison—an indignity which Charles the Bold afterwards retaliated on him. And now, again, after more than half a century, fate avenged a crime against nature by another against religion; fanaticism was to desecrate that which was holy, in order to expose once more to execration the bones of a parricide. Other Iconoclasts from Valenciennes united themselves with those of Tournay, to despoil all the cloisters of the surrounding district, during which a valuable library, the accumulation of centuries, was destroyed by fire The evil soon penetrated into Brabant, also Malines, Herzogenbusch, Breda, and Bergen-op-Zoom experienced the same fate. The provinces Namur and Luxemburg, with a part of Artois and of Hainault, had alone the good fortune to escape the contagion of these outrages. In the short period of four or five days, 400 cloisters were plundered in Brabant and Flanders alone. The northern Netherlands were soon seized with the same mania which had raged so violently through the southern. The Dutch towns, Amsterdam, Leyden, and Gravenhaag, had the alternative of either voluntarily stripping their churches of their ornaments, or of seeing them violently torn from them; the determination of their magistrates saved Delft, Haarlem, Gouda, and Rotterdam from the devastation. The same acts of violence were practised also in the islands of Zealand; the town of Utrecht, and many places in Overyssel and Gröningen suffered the same storms. Friesland was protected by the Count of Aremberg, and Gueldres by the Count of Megen from a like fate.

An exaggerated report of these disturbances which came in from the provinces, spread the alarm to Brussels, where the regent had just made preparations for an extraordinary session of the Council of State. Swarms of Iconoclasts already penetrated into Brabant; and the metropolis, where they were cer tain of powerful support, was threatened by them with a renewal of the same atrocities then under the very eyes of majesty The regent, in fear for her personal safety, which even in the heart of the country, surrounded by provincial governors and knights of the Fleece, she fancied insecure, was already meditating a flight to Mons, in Hainault, which town the Duke of Arschot held for her as a place of refuge, that she might not be driven to any undignified concession by falling into the power of the Iconoclasts. In vain did the knights pledge life and blood for her safety, and urgently beseech her not to expose them to disgrace by so dishonourable a flight, as though they were wanting in courage or zeal to protect their princess; to no purpose did the town of Brussels itself supplicate her not to abandon them in this extremity, and vainly did the Council of State make the most impressive representations that so pusillanimous a step would not fail to encourage still more the insolence of the rebels; she remained immoveable in this desperate condition. As messenger after messenger arrived to warn her that the Iconoclasts were advancing against the metropolis, she issued orders to hold every thing in readiness for her flight, which was to take place quietly with the first approach of morning. At break of day, the aged Viglius presented himself before her, whom, with the view of gratifying the nobles, she had been long accustomed to neglect. He demanded to know the meaning of the preparations he observed, upon which she at last confessed, that she intended to make her escape, and assured him that he would himself do well to secure his own safety by accompanying her. " It is now two years," said the old man to her, "that you might have anticipated these results. Because I have spoken more freely than your courtiers, you have closed your princely ear to me, which has been open only to pernicious suggestions." The regent allowed that she had been in fault, and had been blinded by an appearance of probity; but that she was now driven by necessity. " Are you resolved," answered Viglius, " resolutely to insist upon obedience to the royal commands?" " I am," answered the duchess. " Then have recourse to the great secret of the art of government, to dissimulation, and pretend to join the princes until, with their assistance, you have repelled this storm. Show them a confidence, which you are far from feeling in your heart. Make them take an oath to you, that they will make common cause in resisting these disorders Trust those, as your friends, who show themselves willing to do it; but be careful to avoid frightening away the others by contemptuous treatment." Viglius kept the regent engaged in conversation until the princes arrived, who he was quite certain would in nowise consent to her flight. When they appeared, he quietly withdrew, in order to issue commands to the town council to close the gates of the city, and prohibit egress to every one connected with the court. This last measure effected more than all the representations had done. The regent, who saw herself a prisoner in her own capital, now yielded to the persuasions of the nobles, who pledged themselves to stand by her to the last drop of blood. She made Count Mansfeld commandant of the town, who hastily increased the garrison, and armed her whole court.

The State Council was now held, who finally came to a resolution, that it was expedient to yield to the emergency; to permit the preachings in those places where they had already commenced; to make known the abolition of the Papal Inquisition; to declare the old edicts against the heretics repealed, and before all things, to grant the required indemnity to the confederate nobles without limitation or condition. At the same time the Prince of Orange, Counts Egmont and Horn, with some others were appointed to confer on this head with the deputies of the league. Solemnly and in the most unequivocal terms, the members of the league were declared free from all responsibility, by reason of the petition which had been presented, and all royal officers and authorities were enjoined to act in conformity with this assurance, and neither now, nor for the future, to inflict any injury upon any of the confederates on account of the said petition. In return, the confederates bound themselves to be true and loyal servants of his majesty, to contribute to the utmost of their power to the re-establishment of order and the punishment of the Iconoclasts, to prevail on the people to lay down their arms, and to afford active assistance to the king against internal and foreign enemies. Securities, formally drawn up and subscribed by the plenipotentiaries of both sides, were exchanged between them; the letter of indemnity, in particular, was signed by the duchess with her own hand, and attested by her seal. It was only after a severe struggle, and with tears in her eyes, that the regent, as she tremblingly confessed to the king, was at last induced to consent to this painful step. She threw the whole blame upon the nobles, who had kept her a prisoner in Brussels and compelled her to it by force. Above all, she complained bitterly of the Prince of Orange.

This business accomplished. all the governors hastened to their provinces; Egmont to Flanders, Orange to Antwerp. In the latter city the Protestants had seized the despoiled and plundered churches, and, as if by the rights of war, had taken possession of them. The prince restored them to their lawful owners, gave orders for their repair, and re-established in them the Roman Catholic form of worship. Three of the Iconoclasts, who had been convicted, paid the penalty of their sacrilege on the gallows; some of the rioters were banished, and many others underwent punishment. Afterwards he assembled four deputies of each dialect, or nations, as they were termed, and agreed with them, that as the approaching winter made preaching in the open air impossible, three places within the town should be granted them, where they might either erect new churches, or convert private houses to that purpose That they should there perform their service every Sunday and holiday, and always at the same hour, but on no other days. If, however, no holiday happened in the week, Wednesday should be kept by them instead. No religious party should maintain more than two clergymen, and these must be native Netherlanders, or at least have received naturalization from some considerable town of the provinces. All should take an oath to submit in civil matters to the municipal authorities and the Prince of Orange. They should be liable, like the other citizens, to all imposts. No one should attend sermons armed; a sword, however, should be allowed to each. No preacher should assail the ruling religion from the pulpit, nor enter upon controverted points, beyond what the doctrine itself rendered unavoidable, or what might refer to morals. No psalm should be sung by them out of their appointed district. At the election of their preachers, churchwardens and deacons, as also at all their other consistorial meetings, a person from the government should on each occasion be present, to report their proceedings to the prince and the magistrate. As to all other points, they should enjoy the same protection as the ruling religion. This arrangement was to hold good until the king, with consent of the states, should determine otherwise; but then it should be free to every one to quit the country with his family and his property. From Antwerp the prince hastened to Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht, in order to make there similar arrangements for the restoration of peace; Antwerp, however, was, during his absence, entrusted to the superintendence of Count Hogstraten, who was a mild man, and although an adherent of the League, had never failed in loyalty to the king. It is evident that in this agreement the prince had far overstepped the powers entrusted to him, and though in the service of the king, had acted exactly like a sovereign lord. But he alleged in excuse, that it would be far easier to the magistrate to watch these numerous and powerful sects, if he himself interfered in their worship, and if this took place under his eyes, than if he were to leave the sectarians to themselves in the open air.

In Gueldres, Count Megen showed more severity, and entirely supressed the Protestant sects and banished all their preachers. In Brussels, the regent availed herself of the advantage derived from her personal presence, to put a stop to the public preaching, even outside the town. When, in reference to this, Count Nassau reminded her, in the name of the confederates, of the compact which had been entered into, and demanded if the town of Brussels had inferior rights to the other towns? she answered, if there were public preachings in Brussels before the treaty, it was not her work if they were now discontinued. At the same time, however, she secretly gave the citizens to understand, that the first who should venture to attend a public sermon should certainly be hung. Thus she kept the capital at least faithful to her.

It was more difficult to quiet Tournay, which office was committed to Count Horn, in the place of Montigny, to whose government the town properly belonged. Horn commanded the Protestants to vacate the churches immediately, and to content themselves with a house of worship outside the walls. To this their preachers objected, that the churches were erected for the use of the people, by which term, they said, not the heads but the majority were meant If they were expelled from the Roman Catholic churches, it was at least fair that they should be furnished with money for erecting churches of their own. To this the magistrate replied, even if the Catholic party was the weaker, it was indisputably the better. The erection of churches should not be forbidden them; they could not, however, after the injury which the town had already suffered from their brethren, the Iconoclasts, very well expect that it should be further burdened by the erection of their churches. After long quarrelling on both sides, the Protestants contrived to retain possession of some churches, which, for greater security, they occupied with guards. In Valenciennes, too, the Protestants refused submission to the conditions which were offered to them through Philip St. Aldegonde, Baron of Noircarmes, to whom, in the absence of the Marquis of Bergen, the government of that place was entrusted. A reformed preacher, La Grange, a Frenchman by birth, who by his eloquence had gained a complete command over them, urged them to insist on having churches of their own within the town, and to threaten in case of refusal to deliver it up to the Huguenots. A sense of the superior numbers of the Calvinists, and of their understanding with the Huguenots, prevented the governor adopting forcible measures against them.

Count Egmont also, to manifest his zeal for the king's service, did violence to his natural kind-heartedness. Introducing a garrison into the town of Ghent, he caused some of the most refractory rebels to be put to death. The churches were reopened, the Roman Catholic worship renewed, and all foreigners, without exception, ordered to quit the province. To the Calvinists, but to them alone, a site was granted outside the town for the erection of a church. In return, they were compelled to pledge themselves to the most rigid obedience to the municipal authorities, and to active cooperation in the proceedings against the Iconoclasts. He pursued similar measures through all Flanders and Artois One of his noblemen, John Cassembrot, Baron of Beckerzeel, and a Leaguer, pursuing the Iconoclasts at the head of some horsemen of the League, surprised a band of them, just as they were about to break into a town of Hainault, near Grammont, in Flanders, and took thirty of them prisoners, of whom twenty-two were hung upon the spot, and the rest whipped out of the province.

Services of such importance, one would have thought, scarcely deserved to be rewarded with the displeasure of the king; what Orange, Egmont, and Horn performed on this occasion, evinced at least as much zeal, and had as beneficial a result, as anything that was accomplished by Noircarmes, Megen, and Aremberg, to whom the king vouchsafed to show his gratitude both by words and deeds. But their zeal, their services, came too late. They had spoken too loudly against his edicts, had been too vehement in their opposition to his measures, had insulted him too grossly in the person of his minister Granvella, to leave room for forgiveness. No time, no repentance, no atonement, however great, could efface this one offence from the memory of their sovereign.

Philip lay sick at Segovia, when the news of the outbreak of the Iconoclasts, and the uncatholic agreement entered into with the Reformers, reached him. At the same time, the regent renewed her urgent entreaty for his personal visit, of which also all the letters treated, which the President Viglius exchanged with his friend Hopper. Many also of the Belgian nobles addressed special letters to the king, as, for instance, Egmont, Mansfeld, Megen, Aremberg, Noircarmes, and Barlaimont, in which they reported the state of their provinces, and at once explained and justified the arrangements they had made with the disaffected. Just at this period a letter arrived from the German Emperor, in which he recommended Philip to act with clemency towards his Belgian subjects, and offered his mediation in the matter. He had also written direct to the regent herself in Brussels, and added letters to the several leaders of the nobility, which, however, were never delivered. Having conquered the first anger which this hateful occurrence had excited, the king referred the whole matter to his council.

The party of Granvella, which had the preponderance in the council, was diligent in tracing a close connexion between the behaviour of the Flemish nobles and the excesses of the church desecrators, which showed itself in the similarity of the demands of both parties, and especially the time which the latter chose for their outbreak. In the same month, they observed, in which the nobles had sent in their three articles of pacification, the Iconoclasts had commenced their work; on the evening of the very day that Orange quitted Antwerp, the churches, too, were plundered. During the whole tumult, not a finger was lifted to take up arms; all the expedients employed were invariably such as turned to the advantage of the sects, while, on the contrary, all others were neglected which tended to the maintenance of the pure faith. Many of the Iconoclasts, it was further said, had confessed that all that they had done was with the knowledge and consent of the princes; though surely nothing was more natural, than for such worthless wretches to seek to screen with great names a crime which they had undertaken solely on their own account A writing also was produced, in which the high nobility were made to promise their services to the "Gueux," to procure the assembly of the States General, the genuineness of which, however, the former strenuously denied. Four different seditious parties were, they said, to be noticed in the Netherlands, which were all more or less connected with one another. and all worked towards a common end. One of these, was those bands of reprobates who desecrated the churches; a second consisted of the various sects who had hired the former to perform their infamous acts; the "Gueux," who had raised themselves to be the defenders of the sects, were the third; and the leading nobles, who were inclined to the "Gueux" by feudal connexions, relationship, and friendship, composed the fourth. All, consequently, were alike fatally infected, and all equally guilty The government had not merely to guard against a few isolated members; it had to contend with the whole body. Since, then, it was ascertained that the people were the seduced party, and the encouragement to rebellion came from higher quarters, it would be wise and expedient to alter the plan hitherto adopted, which now appeared defective in several respects. Inasmuch as all classes had been oppressed without distinction, and as much of severity shown to the lower orders as of contempt to the nobles, both had been compelled to lend support to one another; a party had been given to the latter, and leaders to the former. Unequal treatment seemed an infallible expedient to separate them; the mob, always timid and indolent when not goaded by the extremity of distress, would very soon desert its adored protectors, and quickly learn to see in their fate well-merited retribution, if only it was not driven to share it with them It was therefore proposed to the king to treat the great multitude for the future with more leniency, and to direct all measures of severity against the leaders of the faction. In order, however, to avoid the appearance of a disgraceful concession, it was considered advisable to accept the mediation of the Emperor, and to impute to it alone, and not to the justice of their demands, that the king, out of pure generosity, had granted to his Belgian subjects as much as they asked.

The question of the king's personal visit to the provinces was now again mooted, and all the difficulties which had formerly been raised on this head, appeared to vanish before the present emergency. "Now," said Tyssenacque and Hopper, "the juncture has really arrived at which the king, according to his own declaration, formerly made to Count Egmont, will be ready to risk a thousand lives. To restore quiet to Ghent, Charles V. had undertaken a troublesome and dangerous journey through an enemy's country. This was done for the sake of one single town; and now the peace, perhaps even the possession, of all the United Provinces was at stake." This was the opinion of the majority; and the journey of the king was looked upon as a matter from which he could not possibly any longer escape.

The question now was, whether he should enter upon it with a numerous body of attendants, or with few; and here the Prince of Eboli and Count Figueroa were at issue with the Duke of Alva, as their private interests clashed. If the king journeyed at the head of an army, the presence of the Duke of Alva would be indispensable, who, on the other hand, if matters were peaceably adjusted, would be less required, and must make room for his rivals. "An army," said Figueroa who spoke first, "would alarm the princes, through whose territories it must march, and perhaps even be opposed by them; it would, moreover, unnecessarily burden the provinces for whose tranquillization it was intended, and add a new grievance to the many which had already driven the people to such lengths. It would press indiscriminately upon all of the king's subjects, whereas a court of justice, peaceably administering its office, would observe a marked distinction between the innocent and the guilty. The unwonted violence of the former course would tempt the leaders of the faction to take a more alarming view of their behaviour, in which wantonness and levity had the chief share, and consequently induce them to proceed with deliberation and union; the thought of having forced the king to such lengths would plunge them into despair, in which they would be ready to undertake anything. If the king placed himself in arms against the rebels, he would forfeit the most important advantage which he possessed over them, namely, his authority as sovereign of the country, which would prove the more powerful in proportion as he showed his reliance upon that alone He would place himself thereby, as it were, on a level with the rebels, who, on their side, would not be at a loss to raise an army, as the universal hatred of the Spanish forces would operate in their favour with the nation. By this procedure, the king would exchange the certain advantage which his position as sovereign of the country conferred upon him, for the uncertain result of military operations, which, result as they might, would of necessity destroy a portion of his own subjects. The rumour of his hostile approach would outrun him time enough to allow all who were conscious of a bad cause to place themselves in a posture of defence, and to combine and render availing both their foreign and domestic resources. Here, again, the general alarm would do them important service; the uncertainty who would be the first object of this warlike approach, would drive even the less guilty to the general mass of the rebels, and force those to become enemies to the king, who otherwise would never have been so. If, however, he was coming among them without such a formidable accompaniment; if his appearance was less that of a sanguinary judge than of an angry parent, the courage of all good men would rise, and the bad would perish in their own security. They would persuade themselves what had happened was unimportant, that it did not appear to the king of sufficient moment to call for strong measures. They wished, if they could, to avoid the chance of ruining, by acts of open violence, a cause which might perhaps yet be saved; consequently, by this quiet, peaceable method, every thing would be gained, which by the other would be irretrievably lost; the loyal subject would in no degree be involved in the same punishment with the culpable rebel; on the latter alone would the whole weight of the royal indignation descend Lastly, the enormous expenses would be avoided, which the tranport of a Spanish army to those distant regions would occasion

"But," began the Duke of Alva, "ought the injury of some few citizens to be considered, when danger impends over the whole? Because a few of the loyally disposed may suffer wrong, are the rebels therefore not to be chastised? The offence has been universal, why then should not the punishment be the same? What the rebels have incurred by their actions, the rest have incurred equally by their supineness. Whose fault is it but theirs, that the former have so far succeeded? Why did they not promptly oppose their first attempts? It is said, that circumstances were not so desperate as to justify this violent remedy; but who will ensure us that they will not be so, by the time the king arrives, especially when, according to every fresh despatch of the regent, all is hastening with rapid strides to a ruinous consummation? Is it a hazard we ought to run, to leave the king to discover on his entrance into the provinces the necessity of his having brought with him a military force? It is a fact only too well established, that the rebels have secured foreign succours which stand ready at their command on the first signal; will it then be time to think of preparing for war, when the enemy pass the frontiers? Is it a wise risk to rely for aid upon the nearest Belgian troops, when their loyalty is so little to be depended upon? And is not the regent perpetually reverting in her despatches to the fact, that nothing but the want of a suitable military force has hitherto hindered her from enforcing the edicts, and stopping the progress of the rebels? A well-disciplined and formidable army alone will disappoint all their hopes of maintaining themselves in opposition to their lawful sovereign, and nothing but the certain prospect of destruction will make them lower their demands. Besides, without an adequate force, the king cannot venture his person in hostile countries; he cannot enter into any treaties with his rebellious subjects which would not be derogatory to his honour."

The authority of the speaker gave preponderance to his arguments, and the next question was, when the king should commence his journey, and what road he should tako As the voyage by sea was on every account extremely hazard ons, he had no other alternative but either to proceed thither through the passes near Trent across Germany, or to penetrate from Savoy over the Apennine Alps. The first route would expose him to the danger of the attack of the German Protestants, who were not likely to view with indifference the objects of his journey, and a passage over the Apennines was at this late season of the year not to be attempted. Moreover, it would be necessary to send for the requisite galleys from Italy, and repair them, which would take several months. Finally, as the assembly of the Cortes of Castile, from which he could not well be absent, was already appointed for December, the journey could not be undertaken before the spring. Meanwhile, the regent pressed for explicit instructions how she was to extricate herself from her present embarrassment, without compromising the royal dignity too far; and it was necessary to do something in the interval, till the king could undertake to appease the troubles by his personal presence. Two separate letters were therefore despatched to the duchess; one public, which she could lay before the states and the council chambers, and one private, which was intended for herself alone. In the first, the king announced to her his restoration to health and the fortunate birth of the Infanta, Clara Isabella Eugenia, afterwards wife of the Archduke Albert of Austria, and Princess of the Netherlands. He declared to her his present firm intention to visit the Netherlands in person, for which he was already making the necessary preparations. The assembling of the states he refused, as he had previously done. No mention was made in this letter of the agreement which she had entered into with the Protestants and with the League, because he did not deem it advisable at present absolutely to reject it, and he was still less disposed to acknowledge its validity. On the other hand, he ordered her to reinforce the army, to draw together new regiments from Germany, and to meet the refractory with force For the rest, he concluded, he relied upon the loyalty of the leading nobility, among whom he knew many who were sincere in their attachment both to their religion and their king. In the secret letter, she was again enjoined to do all in her power to prevent the assembling of the states; but if the general voice should become irresistible, and she was com pelled to yield, she was at least to manage so cautiously, that the royal dignity should not suffer, and no one learn the king's consent to their assembly.

While these consulations were held in Spain, the Protestants in the Netherlands made the most extensive use of the privileges which had been compulsorily granted to them The erection of churches, wherever it was permitted, was completed with incredible rapidity; young and old, gentle and simple, assisted in carrying stones; women sacrificed even their ornaments in order to accelerate the work. The two religious parties established in several towns consistories, and a church council of their own, the first move of the kind being made in Antwerp, and placed their form of worship on a well regulated footing. It was also proposed, to raise a common fund by subscription, to meet any sudden emergency of the Protestant church in general. In Antwerp, a memorial was presented by the Calvinists of that town to the Count of Hogstraten, in which they offered to pay three millions of dollars to secure the free exercise of their religion. Many copies of this writing were circulated in the Netherlands; and in order to stimulate others, many had ostentatiously subscribed their names to large sums. Various interpretations of this extravagant offer were made by the enemies of the reformers, and all had some appearance of reason. For instance, it was urged that under the pretext of collecting the requisite sum for fulfilling this engagement, they hoped, without suspicion, to raise funds for military purposes; for whether they should be called upon to contribute *for* or *against*, they would, it was thought, be more ready to burden themselves with a view of preserving peace, than for an oppressive and devastating war. Others saw in this offer nothing more than a temporary stratagem oI the Protestants, by which they hoped to bind the court and keep it irresolute, until they should have gained sufficient strength to confront it. Others again declared it to be a downright bravado in order to alarm the regent, and to raise the courage of their own party by the display of such rich resources. But whatever was the true motive of this proposition, its originators gained little by it; the contributions flowed in scantily and slowly, and the court answered the proposal with silent contempt. The excesses, too, of the Iconoclasts, far from promoting the cause of the League and advancing the Protestant interests, had done irreparable injury to both. The sight of their ruined churches, which, in the language of Viglius, resembled stables more than houses of God, enraged the Roman Catholics, and above all the clergy. All of that religion, who had hitherto been members of the League, now forsook it, alleging that even if it had not intentionally excited and encouraged the excesses of the Iconoclasts, it had beyond question remotely led to them. The intolerance of the Calvinists, who, wherever they were the ruling party, cruelly oppressed the Roman Catholics, completely expelled the delusion in which the latter had long indulged, and they withdrew their support from a party, from which, if they obtained the upper hand, their own religion had so much cause to fear. Thus the League lost many of its best members; the friends and patrons, too, which it had hitherto found amongst the well-disposed citizens now deserted it, and its character began perceptibly to decline. The severity with which some of its members had acted against the Iconoclasts, in order to prove their good disposition towards the regent, and to remove the suspicion of any connexion with the malcontents, had also injured them with the people, who favoured the latter, and thus the League was in danger of ruining itself with both parties at the same time.

The regent had no sooner become acquainted with this change in the public mind, than she devised a plan by which she hoped gradually to dissolve the whole League, or at least to enfeeble it through internal dissensions. For this end, she availed herself of the private letters, which the king had addressed to some of the nobles, and enclosed to her, with full liberty to use them at her discretion. These letters, which overflowed with kind expressions, were presented to those for whom they were intended with an attempt at secrecy, which designedly miscarried, so that on each occasion, some one or other of those who had received nothing of the sort got a hint of them. In order to spread suspicion the more widely, numerous copies of the letters were circulated. This artifice attained its object. Many members of the League began to doubt the honesty of those to whom such brilliant promises were made; through fear of being deserted by their principal members and supporters, they eagerly accepted the conditions which were offered them by the regent, and evinced great anxiety for a speedy reconciliation with the court The general rumour of the impending visit of the king, which the regent took care to have widely circulated, was also of great service to her in this matter; many who could not augur much good to themselves from the royal presence, did not hesitate to accept a pardon, which, perhaps, for what they could tell, was offered them for the last time. Among those who thus received private letters, were Egmont and the Prince of Orange. Both had complained to the king of the evil reports with which designing persons in Spain had laboured to brand their names, and to throw suspicion on their motives and intentions; Egmont, in particular, with the honest simplicity which was peculiar to his character, had asked the monarch, only to point out to him what he most desired, to determine the particular action by which his favour could be best obtained, and zeal in his service evinced, and it should, he assured him, be done. The king, in reply, caused the President Von Tyssenacque, to tell him that he could do nothing better to refute his traducers than to show perfect submission to the royal orders, which were so clearly and precisely drawn up, that no further exposition of them was required, nor any particular instruction. It was the sovereign's part to deliberate, to examine, and to decide; unconditionally to obey was the duty of the subject; the honour of the latter consisted in his obedience. It did not become a member to hold itself wiser than the head. He was assuredly to be blamed for not having done his utmost to curb the unruliness of his sectarians; but it was even yet in his power to make up for past negligence by at least maintaining peace and order until the actual arrival of the king. In thus punishing Count Egmont with reproofs like a disobedient child, the king treated him in accordance with what he knew of his character; with his friend he found it necessary to call in the aid of artifice and deceit. Orange, too, in his letter, had alluded to the suspicions which the king entertained of his loyalty and attachment, but not like Egmont, in the vain hope of removing them; for this he had long given up; but in order to pass from these complaints to a request for permission to resign his offices. He had already frequently made this request to the regent, but had always received from her a refusal, accompanied with the strongest assurance of her regard. The king also to whom he now at last addressed a direct application, returned him the same answer, graced with similar strong assurances of his satisfaction and gratitude. In particular, he expressed the high satisfaction he entertained of the services, which he had lately rendered the Crown in Antwerp, and lamented deeply, that the private affairs of the prince (which the latter had made his chief plea for demanding his dismissal) should have fallen into such disorder; but ended with the declaration that it was impossible for him to dispense with his valuable services, at a crisis which demanded the increase, rather than diminution, of his good and honest servants. He had thought, he added, that the prince entertained a better opinion of him, than to suppose him capable of giving credit to the idle talk of certain persons, who were friends neither to the prince nor to himself. But, at the same time, to give him a proof of his sincerity, he complained to him in confidence of his brother, the Count of Nassau, pretended to ask his advice in the matter, and finally expressed a wish to have the count removed for a period from the Netherlands

But Philip had here to do with a head which, in cunning, was superior to his own. The Prince of Orange had, for a long time, held watch over him and his Privy Council in Madrid and Segovia, through a host of spies, who reported to him every thing of importance that was transacted there. The court of this most secret of all despots had become accessible to his intriguing spirit and his money; in this manner, he had gained possession of several autograph letters of the regent, which she had secretly written to Madrid, and had caused copies to be circulated in triumph in Brussels, and in a measure under her own eyes, insomuch that she saw with astonishment in every body's hands what she thought was preserved with so much care, and entreated the king for the future to destroy her despatches immediately they were read William's vigilance did not confine itself simply to the Court of Spain, he had spies in France, and even at more distant courts. He is also charged with not being over scrupulous as to the means by which he acquired his intelligence. But the most important disclosure was made by an intercepted letter of the Spanish ambassador in France, Francis Von Alava, to the duchess, in which the former descanted on the fair opportunity which was now afforded to the king through the guilt of the Netherlandish people, of establishing an arbitrary power in that country. He therefore advised her, to deceive the nobles by the very arts which they had hitherto employed against herself, and to secure them through smooth words, and an obliging behaviour. The king, he concluded, who knew the nobles to be the hidden springs of all the previous troubles, would take good care to lay hands upon them at the first favourable opportunity, as well as the two, whom he had already in Spain; and did not mean to let them go again, having sworn to make an example in them, which should horrify the whole of Christendom, even if it should cost him his hereditary dominions. This piece of evil news was strongly corroborated by the letters which Bergen and Montigny wrote from Spain, and in which they bitterly complained of the contemptuous behaviour of the Grandees, and the altered deportment of the monarch towards them, and the Prince of Orange was now fully sensible what he had to expect from the fair promises of the king.

The letter of the minister Alava, together with some others from Spain, which gave a circumstantial account of the approaching warlike visit of the king, and of his evil intentions against the nobles, was laid by the prince before his brother Count Louis of Nassau, Counts Egmont, Horn, and Hogstraten, at a meeting at Dendermonde in Flanders, whither these five knights had repaired to confer on the measures necessary for their security. Count Louis, who listened only to his feelings of indignation, foolhardily maintained, that they ought, without loss of time, to take up arms and seize some strongholds. That they ought at all risks to prevent the king's armed entrance into the provinces. That they should endeavour to prevail on the Swiss, the Protestant princes of Germany, and the Huguenots to arm and obstruct his passage through their territories; and if, notwithstanding, he should force his way through these impediments, that the Flemings should meet him with an army on the frontiers. He would take upon himself to negociate a defensive alliance in France, in Switzerland, and in Germany, and to raise in the latter empire four thousand horse, together with a proportionate body of infantry; pretexts would not be wanting for collecting the requisite supplies of money, and the merchants of the reformed sect would, he felt assured, not fail them.

But William, more cautious and more wise, declared himself against this proposal, which, in the execution, would be exposed to numberless difficulties, and had as yet nothing to justify it. The Inquisition, he represented, was in fact abolished, the edicts were nearly sunk into oblivion, and a fair degree of religious liberty accorded. Hitherto, therefore, there existed no valid or adequate excuse for adopting this hostile method; he did not doubt, however, that one would be presented to them before long, and in good time for preparation. His own opinion, consequently, was that they should await this opportunity with patience, and in the mean while still keep a watchful eye upon everything, and contrive to give the people a hint of the threatened danger, that they might be ready to act if circumstances should call for their co-operation. If all present had assented to the opinion of the Prince of Orange, there is no doubt but so powerful a league, formidable both by the influence and the high character of its members, would have opposed obstacles to the designs of the king which would have compelled him to abandon them entirely. But the determination of the assembled knights was much shaken by the declaration with which Count Egmont surprised them. "Rather," said he, "may all that is evil befall me, than that I should tempt fortune so rashly. The idle talk of the Spaniard Alava does not move me; how should such a person be able to read the mind of a sovereign so reserved as Philip, and to decipher his secrets? The intelligence which Montigny gives us, goes to prove nothing more than that the king has a very doubtful opinion of our zeal for his service, and believes he has cause to distrust our loyalty; and for this, I, for my part, must confess that we have given him only too much cause. And it is my serious purpose, by redoubling my zeal, to regain his good opinion, and by my future behaviour to remove, if possible, the distrust which my actions have hitherto excited. How could I tear myself from the arms of my numerous and dependent family, to wander as an exile at foreign courts, a burden to every one who received me, the slave of every one who condescended to assist me—a servant of foreigners, in order to escape a slight degree of constraint at home? Never can the monarch act unkindly towards a servant who was once beloved and dear to him, and who has established a well grounded claim to his gratitude. Never shall I be persuaded, that he, who has expressed such favourable, such gracious sentiments towards his Belgian subjects, and with his own mouth gave me such emphatic, such solemn assurances, can be now devising, as it is pretended, such tyrannical schemes against them. If we do but restore to the country its former repose, chastise the rebels, and re-establish the Roman Catholic form of worship wherever it has been violently suppressed, then, believe me, we shall hear no more of Spanish troops. This is the course to which I now invite you all by my counsel and my example, and to which also most of our brethren already incline. I, for my part, fear nothing from the anger of the king. My conscience acquits me. I trust my fate and fortunes to his justice and clemency." In vain did Nassau, Horn, and Orange labour to shake his resolution, and to open his eyes to the near and inevitable danger. Egmont was really attached to the king; the royal favours, and the condescension with which they were conferred were still fresh in his remembrance. The attentions with which the monarch had distinguished him above all his friends, had not failed of their effect. It was more from false shame than from party spirit that he had defended the cause of his countrymen against him; more from temperament and natural kindness of heart, than from tried principles, that he had opposed the severe measures of the government. The love of the nation, which worshipped him as its idol, carried him away. Too vain to renounce a title which sounded so agreeable, he had been compelled to do something to deserve it; but a single look at his family—a harsher designation applied to his conduct—a dangerous inference drawn from it—the mere sound of crime terrified him from his self-delusion, and scared him back in haste and alarm to his duty.

Orange's whole plan was frustrated by Egmont's withdrawal. The latter possessed the hearts of the people and the confidence of the army, without which it was utterly impossible to undertake any thing effective. The rest had reckoned with so much certainty upon him, that his unexpected defection rendered the whole meeting nugatory. They therefore separated without coming to a determination. All who had met in Dendermonde were expected in the Council of State in Brussels; but Egmont alone repaired thither.

The regent wished to sift him on the subject of this conference, but she could extract nothing further from him, than the production of the letter of Alava, of which he had purposely taken a copy, and which with the bitterest reproofs he laid before her. At first she changed colour at sight of it, but quickly recovering herself, she boldly declared that it was a forgery. "How can this letter," she said, "really come from Alava, when I miss none; and would he, who pretends to have intercepted it, have spared the other letters? Nay, how can it be true, when not a single packet has miscarried, nor a single despatch failed to come to hand? How, too, can it be thought likely that the king would have made Alava master of a secret, which he has not communicated even to me?"

CIVIL WAR.

1566. Meanwhile the regent hastened to take advantage of the schism amongst the nobles to complete the ruin of the League, which was already tottering under the weight of internal dissensions. Without loss of time, she drew from Germany the troops which Duke Eric of Brunswick was holding in readiness, augmented the cavalry, and raised five regiments of Walloons, the command of which she gave to Counts Mansfeld, Megen, Aremberg, and others. To the prince, likewise, she felt it necessary to confide troops, both because she did not wish, by withholding them pointedly, to insult him, and also because the provinces of which he was governor was in urgent need of them; but she took the precaution of joining with him a Colonel Waldenfinger, who should watch all his steps, and thwart his measures if they appeared dangerous. To Count Egmont, the clergy in Flanders paid a contribution of forty thousand gold florins for the maintenance of 1500 men, whom he distributed among the places where danger was most apprehended. Every governor was ordered to increase his military force, and to provide himself with ammunition. These energetic preparations which were making in all places, left no doubt as to the measures which the regent would adopt in future. Conscious of her superior force, and certain of this important support, she now ventured to change her tone, and to employ quite another language with the rebels. She began to put the most arbitrary interpretation on the concessions which, through fear and necessity, she had made to the Protestants, and to restrict all the liberties which she had tacitly granted them to the mere permission of their preaching. All other religious exercises and rites, which yet appeared to be involved in the former privilege, were, by new edicts, expressly forbidden, and all offenders in such matters were to be proceeded against as traitors. The Protestants were permitted to think differently from the ruling church upon the sacrament, but to receive it differently was a crime; baptism, marriage, burial, after their fashion, were prohibited under pain of death. It was a cruel mockery to allow them their religion, and forbid the exercise of it; but this mean artifice of the regent to escape from the obligation of her pledged word, was worthy of the pusillanimity with which she had submitted to its being extorted from her. She took advantage of the most trifling innovations, and the smallest excesses, to interrupt the preachings; and some of the preachers, under the charge of having performed their office in places not appointed to them, were brought to trial, condemned and executed. On more than one occasion, the regent publicly declared that the confederates had taken unfair advantage of her fears, and that she did not feel herself bound by an engagement which had been extorted from her by threats.

Of all the Belgian towns which had participated in the insurrection of the Iconoclasts, none had caused the regent so much alarm as the town of Valenciennes in Hainault. In no other was the party of the Calvinists so powerful, and the spirit of rebellion for which the province of Hainault had always made itself conspicuous, seemed to dwell here as in its native place. The propinquity of France, to which, as well by language as by manners, this town appeared to belong, rather than to the Netherlands, had from the first led to its being governed with great mildness and forbearance, which, however, only taught it to feel its own importance. At the last outbreak of the church desecrators it had been on the point of surrendering to the Huguenots, with whom it maintained the closest understanding The slightest excitement might renew this danger

On this account Valenciennes was the first town to which the regent proposed, as soon as it should be in her power, to send a strong garrison. Philip of Noircarmes, Baron of St. Aldegonde, Governor of Hainault in the place of the absent Marquis of Bergen, had received this charge, and now appeared at the head of an army before its walls. Deputies came to meet him on the part of the magistrate from the town, to petition against the garrison, because the Protestant citizens, who were the superior number, had declared against it. Noircarmes acquainted them with the will of the regent, and gave them the choice between the garrison or a siege. He assured them that not more than four squadrons of horse and six companies of foot should be imposed upon the town; and for this he would give them his son as a hostage. These terms were laid before the magistrate, who, for his part, was much inclined to accept them. But Peregrine Le Grange, the preacher, and the idol of the populace, to whom it was of vital importance to prevent a submission of which he would inevitably become the victim, appeared at the head of his followers, and by his powerful eloquence excited the people to reject the conditions. When their answer was brought to Noircarmes, contrary to all law of nations, he caused the messengers to be placed in irons, and carried them away with him as prisoners· he was, however, by express command of the regent compelled to set them free again. The regent, instructed by secret orders from Madrid to exercise as much forbearance as possible, caused the town to be repeatedly summoned to receive the garrison; when, however, it obstinately persisted in its refusal, it was declared by public edict to be in rebellion, and Noircarmes was authorized to commence the siege in form. The other provinces were forbidden to assist this rebellious town with advice, money, or arms. All the property contained in it was confiscated. In order to let it see the war, before it began in earnest, and to give it time for rational reflection, Noircarmes drew together troops from all Hainault and Cambray (1566), took possession of St. Amant, and placed garrisons in all adjacent places.

The line of conduct adopted towards Valenciennes, allowed the other towns which were similarly situated, to infer the fate which was intended for them also, and at once put the whole League in motion. An army of the Gueux between

3000 and 4000 strong, which was hastily collected from the rabble of fugitives, and the remaining bands of the Iconoclasts, appeared in the territories of Tournay and Lille, in order to secure these two towns, and to annoy the enemy at Valenciennes. The commandant of Lille was fortunate enough to maintain that place by routing a detachment of this army, which, in concert with the Protestant inhabitants, had made an attempt to get possession of it. At the same time, the army of the Gueux, which was uselessly wasting its time at Launoy, was surprised by Noircarmes and almost entirely annihilated. The few, who with desperate courage forced their way through the enemy, threw themselves into the town of Tournay, which was immediately summoned by the victor to open its gates and admit a garrison. Its prompt obedience obtained for it a milder fate. Noircarmes contented himself with abolishing the Protestant consistory, banishing the preachers, punishing the leaders of the rebels, and again re-establishing the Roman Catholic worship, which he found almost entirely suppressed. After giving it a stedfast Roman Catholic as governor, and leaving in it a sufficient garrison, he again returned with his victorious army to Valenciennes to press the siege

This town, confident in its strength, actively prepared for defence, firmly resolved to allow things to come to extremes before it surrendered. The inhabitant had not neglected to furnish themselves with ammunition and provisions for a long siege; all who could carry arms, (the very artisans not excepted,) became soldiers; the houses before the town, and especially the cloisters, were pulled down, that the besiegers might not avail themselves of them to cover their attack. The few adherents of the crown, awed by the multitude, were silent; no Roman Catholic ventured to stir himself. Anarchy and rebellion had taken the place of good order, and the fanaticism of a foolhardy priest gave laws, instead of the legal dispensers of justice. The male population was numerous, their courage confirmed by despair, their confidence unbounded that the siege would be raised, while their hatred against the Roman Catholic religion was excited to the highest pitch. Many had no mercy to expect, all abhorred the general thraldom of an imperious garrison. Noircarmes, whose army had become formidable through the reinforcements which streamed to it from all quarters, and was abundantly furnished with all the requisites for a long blockade, once more attempted to prevail on the town by gentle means, but in vain. At last he caused the trenches to be opened, and prepared to invest the place.

In the mean while, the position of the Protestants had grown as much worse as that of the regent had improved. The league of the nobles had gradually melted away to a third of its original number. Some of its most important defenders, Count Egmont, for instance, had gone over to the king; the pecuniary contributions which had been so confidently reckoned upon came in but slowly and scantily; the zeal of the party began perceptibly to cool, and the close of the fine season made it necessary to discontinue the public preachings, which, up to this time, had been continued. These and other reasons combined, induced the declining party to moderate its demands, and to try every legal expedient before it proceed to extremities. In a general synod of the Protestants, which was held for this object in Antwerp, and which was also attended by some of the confederates, it was resolved to send deputies to the regent, to remonstrate with her upon this breach of faith, and to remind her of her compact. Brederode undertook this office, but was obliged to submit to a harsh and disgraceful rebuff, and was shut out of Brussels He had now recourse to a written memorial, in which, in the name of the whole league, he complained that the duchess had, by violating her word, falsified in sight of all the Protestants the security given by the league, in reliance on which all of them had laid down their arms; that by her insincerity she had undone all the good which the confederates had laboured to effect; that she had sought to degrade the league in the eyes of the people, had excited discord among its members, and had even caused many of them to be persecuted as criminals. He called upon her to recall her late ordinances, which deprived the Protestants of the free exercise of their religion, but above all to raise the siege of Valenciennes, to disband the troops newly enlisted, and ended by assuring her that on these conditions and these alone the league would be responsible for the general tranquillity.

To this the regent replied in a tone, very different from her previous moderation. "Who these confederates are, who address me in this memorial, is, indeed, a mystery to me The confederates with whom I had formerly to do, for aught I know to the contrary, have dispersed. All at least cannot participate in this statement of grievances, for I myself know of many, who, satisfied in all their demands, have returned to their duty. But still, whoever he may be, who without authority and right, and without name addresses me, he has at least given a very false interpretation to my word if he asserts that I guaranteed to the Protestants complete religious liberty. No one can be ignorant how reluctantly I was induced to permit the preachings in the places where they had sprung up unauthorized, and this surely cannot be counted for a concession of freedom in religion. Is it likely that I should have entertained the idea of protecting these illegal consistories, of tolerating this state within a state? Could I forget myself so far as to grant the sanction of law to an objectionable sect; to overturn all order in the church and in the state, and abominably to blaspheme my holy religion? Look to him, who has given you such permission but you must not argue with me. You accuse me of having violated the agreement, which gave you impunity and security The past I am willing to look over, but not what may be done in future. No advantage was to be taken of you on account of the petition of last April, and to the best of my knowledge, nothing of the kind has as yet been done; but whoever again offends in the same way, against the majesty of the king, must be ready to bear the consequences of his crime In fine, how can you presume to remind me of an agreement, which you have been the first to break? At whose instigation were the churches plundered, the images of the saints thrown down, and the towns hurried into rebellion? Who formed alliances with foreign powers, set on foot illegal enlistments, and collected unlawful taxes from the subjects of the king? These are the reasons which have impelled me to draw together my troops, and to increase the severity of the edicts. Whoever now asks me to lay down my arms, cannot mean well to his country or his king, and if ye value your own lives, look to it that your own actions acquit you, instead of judging mine."

All the hopes which the confederates might have entertained of an amicable adjustment sank with this high-toned declaration. Without being confident of possessing powerful support, the regent would not, they argued, employ such language. An army was in the field, the enemy was before Valenciennes, the members who were the heart of the league had abandoned it, and the regent required unconditional submission. Their cause was now so bad, that open resistance could not make it worse. If they gave themselves up defenceless into the hands of their exasperated sovereign, their fate was certain; an appeal to arms could at least make it a matter of doubt; they, therefore, chose the latter, and began seriously to take steps for their defence. In order to ensure the assistance of the German Protestants, Louis of Nassau attempted to persuade the towns of Amsterdam, Antwerp, Tournay, and Valenciennes, to adopt the confession of Augsburg, and in this manner to seal their alliance with a religious union. But the proposition was not successful, because the hatred of the Calvinists to the Lutherans exceeded, if possible, that which they bore to popery. Nassau also began in earnest to negociate for supplies from France, the Palatinate, and Saxony. The Count of Bergen fortified his castles; Brederode threw himself with a small force into his strong town of Viane on the Leck, over which he claimed the rights of sovereignty, and which he hastily placed in a state of defence, and there awaited a reinforcement from the league, and the issue of Nassau's negociations. The flag of war was now unfurled, everywhere the drum was heard to beat; in all parts troops were seen on the march, contributions collected, and soldiers enlisted. The agents of each party often met in the same place, and hardly had the collectors and recruiting officers of the regent quitted a town, when it had to endure a similar visit from the agents of the league.

From Valenciennes the regent directed her attention to Herzogenbusch, where the Iconoclasts had lately committed fresh excesses, and the party of the Protestants had gained a great accession of strength. In order to prevail on the citizens peaceably to receive a garrison, she sent thither, as ambassador, the chancellor Scheiff from Brabant, with counsellor Merode of Petersheim, whom she appointed governor of the town; they were instructed to secure the place by judicious means, and to exact from the citizens a new oath of allegiance. At the same time, the Count of

Megen, who was in the neighbourhood with a body of troops, was ordered to support the two envoys in effecting their commission, and to afford the means of throwing in a garrison immediately. But Brederode, who obtained information of these movements in Viane, had already sent thither one of his creatures, a certain Anton von Bomberg, a hot Calvinist, but also a brave soldier, in order to raise the courage of his party, and to frustrate the designs of the regent. This Bomberg succeeded in getting possession of the letters which the chancellor brought with him from the duchess, and contrived to substitute in their place counterfeit ones, which, by their harsh and imperious language, were calculated to exasperate the minds of the citizens. At the same time, he attempted to throw suspicion on both the ambassadors of the duchess, as having evil designs upon the town. In this he succeeded so well with the mob, that in their mad fury they even laid hands on the ambassadors, and placed them in confinement. He himself at the head of 800 men, who had adopted him as their leader, advanced against the Count of Megen, who was moving in order of battle, and gave him so warm a reception, with some heavy artillery, that he was compelled to retire without accomplishing his object. The regent now sent an officer of justice to demand the release of her ambassadors, and in case of refusal to threaten the place with siege; but Bomberg with his party surrounded the town hall, and forced the magistrate to deliver to him the key of the town. The messenger of the regent was ridiculed and dismissed, and an answer sent through him, that the treatment of the prisoners would depend upon Brederode's orders. The herald, who was remaining outside before the town, now appeared to declare war against her, which however the chancellor prevented.

After his futile attempt on Herzogenbusch, the Count of Megen threw himself into Utrecht, in order to prevent the execution of a design, which Count Brederode had formed against that town. As it had suffered much from the army of the confederates, which was encamped in its immediate neighbourhood, near Viane, it received Megen with open arms as its protector, and conformed to all the alterations which he made in the religious worship. Upon this, he immediately caused a redoubt to be thrown up on the bank of the Leck, which would command Viane. Brederode, not disposed to await his attack, quitted that rendezvous with the best part of his army and hastened to Amsterdam.

However unprofitably the Prince of Orange appeared to be losing his time in Antwerp during these operations, he was, nevertheless, busily employed. At his instigation the league had commenced recruiting, and Brederode had fortified his castles, for which purpose he himself presented him with three cannons, which he had had cast at Utrecht. His eye watched all the movements of the court, and he kept the league warned of the towns which were next menaced with attack. But his chief object appeared to be to get possession of the principal places in the districts under his own government, to which end he, with all his power, secretly assisted Brederode's plans against Utrecht and Amsterdam. The most important place was the Island of Walcheren, where the king was expected to land; and he now planned a scheme for the surprise of this place, the conduct of which was entrusted to one of the confederate nobles, an intimate friend of the Prince of Orange, John of Marnix, Baron of Thoulouse, and brother of Philip of Aldegonde.

1567. Thoulouse maintained a secret understanding with the late mayor of Middleburg, Peter Haak, by which he expected to gain an opportunity of throwing a garrison into Middleburg and Flushing. The recruiting, however, for this undertaking, which was set on foot in Antwerp, could not be carried on so quietly as not to attract the notice of the magistrate. In order, therefore, to lull the suspicions of the latter, and at the same time to promote the success of the scheme, the prince caused the herald, by public proclamation, to order all foreign soldiers and strangers who were in the service of the state, or employed in other business, forthwith to quit the town He might, say his adversaries, by closing the gates, have easily made himself master of all these suspected recruits; but he expelled them from the town, in order to drive them the more quickly to the place of their destination. They immediately embarked on the Scheldt, and sailed down to Rammekens; as, however, a market-vessel of Antwerp, which ran into Flushing a little before them, had given warning of their design, they were forbidden to enter the port. They found the same difficulty at Arnemuiden, near Middleburg, although the Protestants in that place exerted themselves to raise an insurrection in their favour Thoulouse, therefore, without having accomplished anything, put about his ships, and sailed back down the Scheldt as far as Osterweel, a quarter of a mile from Antwerp, where he disembarked his people and encamped on the shore, with the hope of getting men from Antwerp; and also in order to revive by his presence the courage of his party, which had been cast down by the proceedings of the magistrate. By the aid of the Calvinistic clergy, who recruited for him, his little army increased daily, so that at last he began to be formidable to the Antwerpians, whose whole territory he laid waste. The magistrate was for attacking him here with the militia, which, however, the Prince of Orange successfully opposed, by the pretext that it would not be prudent to strip the town of soldiers.

Meanwhile, the regent had hastily brought together a small army, under the command of Philip of Launoy, which moved from Brussels to Antwerp by forced marches. At the same time, Count Megen managed to keep the army of the Gueux shut up and employed at Viane, so that it could neither hear of these movements, nor hasten to the assistance of its confederates. Launoy, on his arrival, attacked by surprise the dispersed crowds, who, little expecting an enemy, had gone out to plunder, and destroyed them in one terrible carnage. Thoulouse threw himself with the small remnant of his troops into a country house, which had served him as his head-quarters, and for a long time defended himself with the courage of despair, until Launoy, finding it impossible to dislodge him, set fire to the house. The few who escaped the flames, fell on the swords of the enemy, or were drowned in the Scheldt. Thoulouse himself preferred to perish in the flames, rather than to fall into the hands of the enemy. This victory, which swept off more than a thousand of the enemy, was purchased by the conqueror cheaply enough, for he did not lose more than two men. Three hundred of the leaguers who surrendered, were cut down without mercy on the spot, as a sally from Antwerp was momentarily dreaded.

Before the battle actually commenced, no anticipation of such an event had been entertained in Antwerp. The Prince of Orange, who got early information of it, had taken the precaution, the day before, of causing the bridge which unites the town with Osterweel to be destroyed, in order, as he gave out, to prevent the Calvinists within the town going out to join the army of Thoulouse. A more probable motive seems to have been a fear lest the Catholics should attack the army of the Gueux general in the rear, or lest Launoy should prove victorious, and try to force his way into the town. On the same pretext, the gates of the city were also shut by his orders, and the inhabitants, who did not comprehend the meaning of all these movements, fluctuated between curiosity and alarm, until the sound of artillery from Osterweel announced to them what there was going on. In clamorous crowds they all ran to the walls and ramparts, from which, as the wind drove the smoke from the contending armies, they commanded a full view of the whole battle. Both armies were so near to the town that they could discern their banners, and clearly distinguish the voices of the victors and the vanquished. More terrible even than the battle itself was the spectacle which this town now presented. Each of the conflicting armies had its friends and its enemies on the wall. All that went on in the plain, roused on the ramparts exultation or dismay; on the issue of the conflict the fate of each spectator seemed to depend. Every movement on the field could be read in the faces of the townsmen; defeat and triumph, the terror of the conquered, and the fury of the conqueror. Here a painful but idle wish to support those who are giving way, to rally those who fly; there an equally futile desire to overtake them, to slay them, to extirpate them. Now the Gueux fly, and ten thousand men rejoice; Thoulouse's last place and refuge is in flames, and the hopes of twenty thousand citizens are consumed with him.

But the first bewilderment of alarm soon gave place to a frantic desire of revenge. Shrieking aloud, wringing her hands and with dishevelled hair, the widow of the slain general rushed amidst the crowds to implore their pity and help. Excited by their favourite preacher, Hermann, the Calvinists fly to arms, determined to avenge their brethren, or to perish with them; without reflection, without plan or leader, guided by nothing but their anguish, their delirium, they rush to the Red Gate of the city, which leads to the field of battle; but there is no egress, the gate is shut, and the foremost of the crowd recoil on those that follow. Thousands and thousands collect together, a dreadful rush is made to the Meer Bridge. We are betrayed! we are prisoners! is the general cry. Destruction to the Papists, death to him who has betrayed us!—a sullen murmur, portentous of a revolt, runs through the multitude. They begin to suspect, that all that has taken place has been set on foot by the Roman Catholics, to destroy the Calvinists. They had slain their defenders, and they would now fall upon the defenceless. With fatal speed this suspicion spreads through the whole of Antwerp. Now they can, they think, understand the past, and they fear something still worse in the back ground; a frightful distrust gains possession of every mind. Each party dreads the other; every one sees an enemy in his neighbour; the mystery deepens the alarm and horror; a fearful condition for a populous town, in which every accidental concourse instantly becomes tumult, every rumour started amongst them becomes a fact, every small spark a blazing flame, and by the force of numbers and collision all passions are furiously inflamed. All who bore the name of Calvinists were roused by this report. Fifteen thousand of them take possession of the Meer bridge, and plant heavy artillery upon it, which they had taken by force from the arsenal; the same thing also happens at another bridge; their number makes them formidable, the town is in their hands; to escape an imaginary danger, they bring all Antwerp to the brink of ruin.

Immediately on the commencement of the tumult, the Prince of Orange hastened to the Meer Bridge, where, boldly forcing his way through the raging crowd, he commanded peace, and entreated to be heard. At the other bridge, Count Hogstraten, accompanied by the Burgomaster Strahlen, made the same attempt; but not possessing a sufficient share either of eloquence or of popularity to command attention, he referred the tumultuous crowd to the prince, around whom all Antwerp now furiously thronged. The gate, he endeavoured to explain to them, was shut simply to keep off the victor, whoever he might be, from the city, which would otherwise become the prey of an infuriated soldiery. In vain!

the frantic people would not listen, and one more daring than the rest presented his musket at him, calling him a traitor With tumultuous shouts, they demanded the key of the Red Gate, which he was ultimately forced to deliver into the hands of the preacher Hermann. But, he added with happy presence of mind, they must take heed what they were doing; in the suburbs, 600 of the enemy's horse were waiting to receive them. This invention, suggested by the emergency, was not so far removed from the truth as its author perhaps imagined; for no sooner had the victorious general perceived the commotion in Antwerp, than he caused his whole cavalry to mount, in the hope of being able, under favour of the disturbance, to break into the town. I, at least, continued the Prince of Orange, shall secure my own safety in time, and he who follows my example will save himself much future regret. These words, opportunely spoken and immediately acted upon, had their effect. Those who stood nearest, followed him, and were again followed by the next, so that at last the few who had already hastened out of the city, when they saw no one coming after them, lost the desire of coping alone with the six hundred horse. All accordingly returned to the Meer Bridge, where they posted watches and videttes, and the night was passed tumultuously under arms.

The town of Antwerp was now threatened with fearful bloodshed and pillage. In this pressing emergency, Orange assembled an extraordinary senate, to which were summoned all the best disposed citizens of the four nations. If they wished, said he, to repress the violence of the Calvinists, they must oppose them with an army strong enough and prepared to meet them. It was therefore resolved to arm with speed the Roman-Catholic inhabitants of the town, whether natives, Italians, or Spaniards, and, if possible, to induce the Lutherans also to join them. The haughtiness of the Calvinists, who, proud of their wealth and confident in their numbers, treated every other religious party with contempt, had long made the Lutherans their enemies, and the mutual exasperation of these two Protestant churches was even more implacable than their common hatred of the dominant church. This jealousy the magistrate had turned to advantage, by making use of one party to curb the other, and had thus contrived to keep the Calvinists in check, who, from their numbers and insolence, were most to be feared. With this view, he had tacitly taken into his protection the Lutherans, as the weaker and more peaceable party, having moreover invited for them, from Germany, spiritual teachers, who, by controversial sermons, might keep up the mutual hatred of the two bodies. He encouraged the Lutherans in the vain idea, that the king thought more favourably of their religious creed than of that of the Calvinists, and exhorted them to be careful how they damaged their good cause, by any understanding with the latter. It was not, therefore, difficult to bring about, for the moment, a union with the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans, as its object was to keep down their detested rivals. At dawn of day, an army was opposed to the Calvinists, which was far superior in force to their own. At the head of this army, the eloquence of Orange had far greater effect, and found far more attention than on the preceding evening, unbacked by such strong persuasion. The Calvinists, though in possession of arms and artillery, yet alarmed at the superior numbers arrayed against them, were the first to send envoys, and to treat for an amicable adjustment of differences, which by the tact and good temper of the Prince of Orange, he concluded to the satisfaction of all parties. On the proclamation of this treaty, the Spaniards and Italians immediately laid down their arms. They were followed by the Calvinists, and these again by the Roman Catholics; last of all, the Lutherans disarmed.

Two days and two nights Antwerp had continued in this alarming state. During the tumult, the Roman Catholics had succeeded in placing barrels of gunpowder under the Meer Bridge, and threatened to blow into the air the whole army of the Calvinists, who had done the same in other places to destroy their adversaries. The destruction of the town hung on the issue of a moment, and nothing but the prince's presence of mind saved it.

Noircarmes with his army of Walloons still lay before Valenciennes, which, in firm reliance on being relieved by the Gueux, obstinately refused to listen to all the representations of the regent, and rejected every idea of surrender An order of the court had expressly forbidden the royalist general to press the siege, until he should receive reinforcements from Germany. Whether from forbearance or fear, the king regarded with abhorrence the violent measure of storming the place, as necessarily involving the innocent in the fate of the guilty, and exposing the loyal subject to the same ill-treatment as the rebel. As, however, the confidence of the besieged augmented daily, and emboldened by the inactivity of the besiegers, they annoyed him by frequent sallies, and after burning the cloisters before the town, retired with the plunder—as the time uselessly lost before this town was put to good use by the rebels and their allies, Noircarmes besought the duchess to obtain immediate permission from the king to take it by storm. The answer arrived more quickly than Philip was ever before wont to reply. As yet they must be content, simply to make the necessary preparations, and then to wait awhile to allow terror to have its effect; but if, upon this, they did not appear ready to capitulate, the storming might take place, but, at the same time, with the greatest possible regard for the lives of the inhabitants Before the regent allowed Noircarmes to proceed to this extremity, she empowered Count Egmont, with the Duke of Arschot, to treat once more with the rebels amicably. Both conferred with the deputies of the town, and omitted no argument calculated to dispel their delusion. They acquainted them with the defeat of Thoulouse, their sole support, and with the fact that the Count of Megen had cut off the army of the Gueux from the town, and assured them that if they had held out so long, they owed it entirely to the king's forbearance They offered them full pardon for the past; every one was to be free to prove his innocence before whatever tribunal he should choose; such as did not wish to avail themselves of this privilege were to be allowed fourteen days to quit the town with all their effects. Nothing was required of the townspeople but the admission of the garrison. To give time to deliberate on these terms, an armistice of three days was granted. When the deputies returned, they found their fellow citizens less disposed than ever to an accommodation, reports of new levies by the Gueux having, in the mean time, gained currency. Thoulouse, it was pretended, had conquered, and was advancing with a powerful army to relieve the place. Their confidence went so far, that they even ventured to break the armistice, and to fire upon the besiegers. At last, the burgomaster with difficulty succeeded in bringing matters so far towards a peaceful settlement, that twelve of the town counsellors were sent into the camp with the following conditions. The edict, by which Valenciennes had been charged with treason, and declared an enemy to the country, was required to be recalled, the confiscation of their goods revoked, and the prisoners on both sides restored to liberty, the garrison was not to enter the town, before every one, who thought good to do so, had placed himself and his property in security; and a pledge to be given, that the inhabitants should not be molested in any manner, and that their expenses should be paid by the king.

Noircarmes was so indignant with these conditions, that he was almost on the point of ill treating the deputies. If they had not come, he told them, to give up the place, they might return forthwith, lest he should send them home, with their hands tied behind their backs. Upon this, the deputies threw the blame on the obstinacy of the Calvinists. and entreated him with tears in their eyes to keep them in the camp, as they did not, they said, wish to have anything more to do with their rebellious townsmen, or to be joined in their fate. They even knelt to beseech the intercession of Egmont, but Noircarmes remained deaf to all their entreaties, and the sight of the chains which he ordered to be brought out, drove them reluctantly enough back to Valenciennes. Necessity, not severity, imposed this harsh procedure upon the general. The detention of ambassadors had, on a former occasion, drawn upon him the reprimand of the duchess; the people in the town would not have failed to have ascribed the non-appearance of their present deputies to the same cause as in the former case had detained them Besides, he was loathe to deprive the town of any out of the small residue of well disposed citizens, or to leave it a prey to a blind, foolhardy mob. Egmont was so mortified at the bad result of his embassy, that he, the night following, rode round to reconnoitre its fortifications, and returned well satisfied to have convinced himself that it was no longer tenable.

Valenciennes stretches down a gentle acclivity into the level plain, being built on a site as strong as it is delightful. On one side enclosed by the Scheldt and another smaller river, and on the other protected by deep ditches, thick walls, and towers, it appears capable of defying every attack. But Noircarmes had discovered a few points where neglect had allowed the fosse to be filled almost up to the level of the natural surface, and of these he determined to avail himself in storming. He drew together all the scattered corps, by which he had invested the town, and during a tempestuous night carried the suburb of Berg, without the loss of a single man. He then assigned separate points of attack to the Count of Bossu, the young Charles of Mansfeld, and the younger Barlaimont, and under a terrible fire which drove the enemy from his walls, his troops were moved up with all possible speed. Close before the town, and opposite the gate, under the eyes of the besiegers, and with very little loss, a battery was thrown up to an equal height with the fortifications. From this point, the town was bombarded with an unceasing fire for four hours. The Nicolaus tower, on which the besieged had planted some artillery, was among the first that fell, and many perished under its ruins. The guns were directed against all the most conspicuous buildings, and a terrible slaughter was made amongst the inhabitants. In a few hours, their principal works were destroyed, and in the gate itself so extensive a breach was made, that the besieged despairing of any longer defending themselves, sent in haste two trumpeters to entreat a parley. This was granted, but the storm was continued without intermission. The ambassador entreated Noircarmes to grant them the same terms, which only two days before they had rejected. But circumstances had now changed, and the victor would hear no more of conditions. The unceasing fire left the inhabitants no time to repair the ramparts, which filled the fosse with their débris, and opened many a breach for the enemy to enter by. Certain of utter destruction, they surrendered next morning at discretion, after a bombardment of six-and-thirty hours without intermission, and three thousand bombs had been thrown into the city. Noircarmes marched into the town with his victorious army under the strictest discipline, and was received by a crowd of women and children, who went to meet him, carrying green boughs, and beseeching his pity. All the citizens were immediately disarmed, the commandant and his son beheaded; thirty-six of the most guilty of the rebels, among whom were La Grange and another Calvinistic preacher, Guido de Bresse, atoned for their obstinacy at the gallows; all the municipal functionaries were deprived of their offices, and the town of all its privileges. The Roman Catholic worship was immediately restored in full dignity, and the Protestant abolished. The Bishop of Arras was obliged to quit his residence in the town, and a strong garrison placed in it to ensure its future obedience.

The fate of Valenciennes, towards which all eyes had been turned, was a warning to the other towns which had similarly offended. Noircarmes followed up his victory, and marched immediately against Maestricht, which surrendered without a blow, and received a garrison. From thence he marched to Tornhut, to awe, by his presence, the people of Herzogenbusch and Antwerp. The Gueux in this place, who, under the command of Bomberg, had carried all things before them, were now so terrified at his approach that they quitted the town in haste. Noircarmes was received without opposition. The ambassadors of the duchess were immediately set at liberty. A strong garrison was thrown into Tornhut; Cambray also opened its gates, and joyfully recalled its archbishop, whom the Calvinists had driven from his see, and who deserved this triumph, as he did not stain his entrance with blood. Ghent, Ypres, and Oudenarde submitted and received garrisons. Gueldres was now almost entirely cleared of the rebels, and reduced to obedience by the Count of Megen. In Friesland and Gröningen, the Count of Aremberg had eventually the same success; but it was not obtained here so rapidly or so easily, since the count wanted consistency and firmness, and these warlike republicans maintained more pertinaciously their privileges, and were greatly supported by the strength of their position. With the exception of Holland, all the provinces had yielded before the victorious arms of the duchess. The courage of the disaffected sunk entirely, and nothing was left to them but flight or submission.

RESIGNATION OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

Ever since the establishment of the Geusen League, but more perceptibly since the outbreak of the Iconoclasts, the spirit of rebellion and disaffection had spread so rapidly among all classes; parties had become so blended and confused, that the regent had difficulty in distinguishing her own adherents, and at last hardly knew on whom to rely. The lines of demarcation between the loyal and the disaffected had grown gradually fainter, until at last they almost entirely vanished. The frequent alterations, too, which she had been obliged to make in the laws, and which were at most the expedients and suggestions of the moment, had taken from them their precision and binding force, and had given full scope to the arbitrary will of every individual, whose office it was to interpret them. And at last, amidst the number and variety of the interpretations, the spirit was lost, and the intention of the lawgiver baffled. The close connexion, which in many cases subsisted between Protestants and Roman Catholics, between Gueux and Royalists, and which not unfrequently gave them a common interest, led the latter to avail themselves of the loophole, which the vagueness of the laws left open, and in favour of their Protestant friends and associates, evaded, by subtle distinctions, all severity in the discharge of their duties In their minds, it was enough not to be a declared rebel, not one of the Gueux, or at least not a heretic, to be authorized to mould their duties to their inclinations, and to set the most arbitrary limits to their obedience to the king. Feeling themselves irresponsible, the governors of the provinces, the civil functionaries, both high and low, the municipal officers, and the military commanders had all become extremely remiss in their duty, and presuming upon this impunity, showed a pernicious indulgence to the rebels and their adherents, which rendered abortive all the regent's measures of coercion. This general indifference and corruption of so many servants of the state had further this injurious result, that it led the turbulent to reckon on far stronger support, than in reality they had cause for, and to count on their own side all who were but lukewarm adherents of the court. This way of thinking, erroneous as it was, gave them greater courage and confidence, it had the same effect as if it had been well founded; and the uncertain vassals of the king became in consequence almost as injurious to him, as his declared enemies, without at the same time being liable to the same measures of severity. This was especially the case with the Prince of Orange, Counts Egmont, Bergen

Hogstraten, Horn, and several others of the higher nobility. The regent felt the necessity of bringing these doubtful subjects to an explanation, in order either to deprive the rebels of a fancied support, or to unmask the enemies of the king. And the latter reason was of the more urgent moment, when being obliged to send an army into the field, it was of the utmost importance to entrust the command of the troops to none but those of whose fidelity she was fully assured. She caused, therefore, an oath to be drawn up, which bound all who took it to advance the Roman Catholic faith, to pursue and punish the Iconoclasts, and to help by every means in their power in extirpating all kinds of heresy. It also pledged them to treat the king's enemies as their own, and to serve, without distinction, against all whom the regent, in the king's name, should point out. By this oath, she did not hope so much to test their sincerity, and still less to secure them, as rather to gain a pretext for removing the suspected parties if they declined to take it, and for wresting from their hands a power which they abused, or a legitimate ground for punishing them, if they took it and broke it. This oath was exacted by the court from all Knights of the Fleece, all civil functionaries and magistrates, all officers of the army—from every one in short who held any appointment in the state. Count Mansfeld was the first who publicly took it in the Council of State at Brussels; his example was followed by the Duke of Arschot, Counts Egmont, Megen, and Barlaimont. Hogstraten and Horn endeavoured to evade the necessity. The former was offended at a proof of distrust which shortly before the regent had given him. Under the pretext that Malines could not safely be left any longer without its governor, but that the presence of the count was no less necessary in Antwerp, she had taken from him that province, and given it to another, whose fidelity she could better reckon upon. Hogstraten expressed his thanks that she had been pleased to release him from one of his burdens, adding that she would complete the obligation, if she would relieve him of the other also. True to his determination, Count Horn was living on one of his estates in the strong town of Weerdt, having retired altogether from public affairs. Having quitted the service of the state, he owed, he thought, nothing more either to the re public or to the king, and declined the oath, which in his case appears at last to have been waved.

The Count of Brederode was left the choice of either taking the prescribed oath, or resigning the command of his squadron of cavalry. After many fruitless attempts to evade the alternative, on the plea that he did not hold office in the state, he at last resolved upon the latter course, and thereby escaped all risk of perjuring himself.

Vain were all the attempts to prevail on the Prince of Orange to take the oath, who, from the suspicion which had long attached to him, required more than any other this purification; and from whom the great power, which it had been necessary to place in his hands, fully justified the regent in exacting it. It was not, however, advisable to proceed against him with the laconic brevity adopted towards Brederode and the like; on the other hand, the voluntary resignation of all his offices, which he tendered, did not meet the object of the regent, who foresaw clearly enough how really dangerous he would become, as soon as he should feel himself independent, and be no longer checked by any external considerations of character or duty, in the prosecution of his secret designs. But ever since the consultation in Dendermonde, the Prince of Orange had made up his mind to quit the service of the King of Spain on the first favourable opportunity, and till better days to leave the country itself. A very disheartening experience had taught him how uncertain are hopes built on the multitude, and how quickly their zeal is cooled by the necessity of fulfilling its lofty promises. An army was already in the field, and a far stronger one was, he knew, on its road, under the command of the Duke of Alva. The time for remonstrances was past, it was only at the head of an army that an advantageous treaty could now be concluded with the regent, and by preventing the entrance of the Spanish general. But now where was he to raise this army, in want as he was of money, the sinews of warfare, since the Protestants had retracted their boastful promises, and deserted him in this pressing emergency *? Religious jealousy and hatred, more-

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* How valiant the wish, and how sorry the deed was, is proved by the following instance amongst others. Some friends of the national liberty

over, separated the two Protestant churches, and stood in the way of every salutary combination against the common enemy of their faith. The rejection of the confession of Augsburg by the Calvinists had exasperated all the Protestant princes of Germany, so that no support was to be looked for from the empire. With Count Egmont, the excellent army of Walloons was also lost to the cause—for they followed with blind devotion the fortunes of their general, who had taught them at St. Quentin and Gravelines to be invincible. And again, the outrages which the Iconoclasts had perpetrated on the churches and convents, had estranged from the league the numerous, wealthy, and powerful class of the established clergy, who, before this unlucky episode, were already more than half gained over to it; while, by her intrigues, the regent daily contrived to deprive the league itself of some one or other of its most influential members.

All these considerations combined, induced the prince to postpone to a more favourable season a project for which the present juncture was little suited, and to leave a country where his longer stay could not effect any advantage for it, but must bring certain destruction on himself. After intelligence gleaned from so many quarters, after so many proofs of distrust, so many warnings from Madrid, he could be no longer doubtful of the sentiments of Philip towards him. If even he had any doubt, his uncertainty would soon have been dispelled by the formidable armament which was preparing in Spain. and which was to have for its leader, not the king, as was falsely given out, but, as he was better informed, the Duke of Alva, his personal enemy, and the very man he had most cause to fear. The prince had seen too deeply into Philip's heart to believe in the sincerity of his reconciliation, after having once awakened his fears. He judged his own conduct too justly to reckon, like his friend Egmont, on reap

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Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, had solemnly engaged in Amsterdam to subscribe to a common fund the hundredth penny of their estates, until a sum of 11,000 florins should be collected, which was to be devoted to the common cause and interests. An alms box, protected by three locks, was prepared for the reception of these contributions. After the expiration of the prescribed period it was opened; and a sum was found amounting to 700 florins, which was given to the hostess of the Count of Brederode, in part payment of his unliquidated score. Univ. Hist. of the N. Vol. 3.

ing a gratitude from the king to which he had not sown. He could, therefore, expect nothing but hostility from him, and prudence counselled him to screen himself by a timely flight from its actual outbreak. He had hitherto obstinately refused to take the new oath; and all the written exhortations of the regent had been fruitless. At last she sent to him at Antwerp her private secretary Berti, who was to put the matter emphatically to his conscience, and forcibly remind him of all the evil consequences which so sudden a retirement from the royal service would draw upon the country, as well as the irreparable injury it would do to his own fair fame. Already, she informed him by her ambassador, his declining the required oath had cast a shade upon his honour, and imparted to the general voice, which accused him of an understanding with the rebels, an appearance of truth which this unconditional resignation would convert to absolute certainty. It was for the sovereign to discharge his servants, but it did not become the servant to abandon his sovereign. The envoy of the regent found the prince in his palace at Antwerp, already, as it appeared, withdrawn from the public service, and entirely devoted to his private concerns. The prince told him, in the presence of Hogstraten, that he had refused to take the required oath, because he could not find that such a proposition had ever before been made to a governor of a province; because he had already bound himself, once for all, to the king, and therefore, by taking this new oath, he would tacitly acknowledge that he had broken the first. He had also refused, because the old oath enjoined him to protect the rights and privileges of the country, but he could not tell whether this new one might not impose upon him duties which would contravene the first; because, too, the clause which bound him to serve, if required, against all without distinction, did not except even the Emperor, his feudal lord, against whom, however, he, as his vassal, could not conscientiously make war. He had refused to take this oath, because it might impose upon him the necessity of surrendering his friends and relations, his children, nay, even his wife, who was a Lutheran, to butchery. According to it, moreover, he must lend himself to every thing which it should occur to the king's fancy or passion to demand; but the king might thus exact from him things which he shuddered even to think of; and even the severities which were now, and had been all along exercised upon the Protestants, were the most revolting to his heart. This oath, in short, was repugnant to his feelings as a man, and he could not take it. In conclusion, the name of the Duke of Alva dropped from his lips, in a tone of bitterness, and he became immediately silent.

All these objections were answered, point by point, by Berti. Certainly such an oath had never been required from a governor before him, because the provinces had never been similarly circumstanced. It was not exacted because the governors had broken the first, but in order to remind them vividly of their former vows, and to freshen their activity in the present emergency. This oath would not impose upon him any thing which offended against the rights and privileges of the country, for the king had sworn to observe these, as well as the Prince of Orange. The oath did not, it was true, contain any reference to a war with the Emperor, or any other sovereign to whom the prince might be related; and if he really had scruples on this point, a distinct clause could easily be inserted, expressly providing against such a contingency. Care would be taken to spare him any duties which were repugnant to his feelings as a man, and no power on earth would compel him to act against his wife or against his children. Berti was then passing to the last point, which related to the Duke of Alva, but the prince, who did not wish to have this part of his discourse canvassed, interrupted him. "The king was coming to the Netherlands," he said, "and he knew the king. The king would not endure that one of his servants should have wedded a Lutheran, and he had, therefore, resolved to go with his whole family into voluntary banishment, before he was obliged to submit to the same by compulsion. But," he concluded, "wherever he might be, he would always conduct himself as a subject of the king." Thus far-fetched were the motives which the prince adduced, to avoid touching upon the single one which really decided him.

Berti had still a hope of obtaining, through Egmont's eloquence, what by his own he despaired of effecting. He therefore proposed a meeting with the latter (1567), which the prince assented to the more willingly, as he himself felt a desire to embrace his friend once more before his departure and if possible, to snatch the deluded man from certain destruction. This remarkable meeting, at which the private secretary Berti, and the young Count Mansfeld, were also present, was the last that the two friends ever held, and took place in Villebroeck, a village on the Rupel, between Brussels and Antwerp. The Calvinists, whose last hope rested on the issue of this conference, found means to acquaint themselves of its import by a spy, who concealed himself in the chimney of the apartment where it was held. All three attempted to shake the determination of the prince, but their united eloquence was unable to move him from his purpose. "It will cost you your estates, Orange, if you persist in this intention," said the Prince of Gaure, as he took him aside to a window. "And you your life, Egmont, if you change not yours," replied the former. "To me it will at least be a consolation in my misfortunes, that I desired, in deed as well as in word, to help my country and my friends in the hour of need; but you, my friend, you are dragging friends and country with you to destruction." And saying these words, he once again exhorted him, still more urgently than ever, to return to the cause of his country, which his arm alone was yet able to preserve; if not, at least, for his own sake, to avoid the tempest which was gathering against him from Spain

But all the arguments, however lucid, with which a far discerning prudence supplied him, and however urgently enforced, with all the ardour and animation which the tender anxiety of friendship could alone inspire, did not avail to destroy the fatal confidence which still fettered Egmont's better reason. The warning of Orange seemed to come from a sad and dispirited heart; but for Egmont the world still smiled. To abandon the pomp and affluence in which he had grown up to youth and manhood; to part with all the thousand conveniences of life which alone made it valuable to him, and all this to escape an evil which his buoyant spirit regarded as remote, if not imaginary; no, that was not a sacrifice which could be asked from Egmont. But had he even been less given to indulgence than he was, with what heart could he have consigned a princess accustomed by uninterrupted prosperity to ease and comfort, a wife who loved him as dearly as she was beloved, the children on whom his soul hung in hope and fondness, to privations at the prospect of which his own courage sank, and which a sublime philosophy alone can enable sensuality to undergo. "You will never persuade me, Orange," said Egmont, "to see things in the gloomy light in which they appear to thy mournful prudence. When I have succeeded in abolishing the public preachings, and chastising the Iconoclasts, in crushing the rebels, and restoring peace and order in the provinces, what can the king lay to my charge? The king is good and just; I have claims upon his gratitude, and I must not forget what I owe to myself." "Well, then," cried Orange indignantly, and with bitter anguish, "trust, if you will, to this royal gratitude! but a mournful presentiment tells me—and may Heaven grant that I am deceived!—that you, Egmont, will be the bridge by which the Spaniards will pass into our country to destroy it." After these words, he drew him to his bosom, ardently clasping him in his arms. Long, as though the sight was to serve for the remainder of his life, did he keep his eyes fixed upon him; the tears fell; they saw each other no more.

The very next day, the Prince of Orange wrote his letter of resignation to the regent, in which he assured her of his perpetual esteem, and once again entreated her to put the best interpretation on his present step. He then set off, with his three brothers, and his whole family, for his own town of Breda, where he remained only as long as was requisite to arrange some private affairs. His eldest son, Prince Philip William, was left behind at the University of Louvain, where he thought him sufficiently secure under the protection of the privileges of Brabant, and the immunities of the academy; an imprudence which, if it was really not designed, can hardly be reconciled with the just estimate which, in so many other cases, he had taken of the character of his adversary. In Breda, the heads of the Calvinists once more consulted him whether there was still hope for them, or whether all was irretrievably lost. "He had before advised them," replied the prince, "and must now do so again, to accede to the Confession of Augsburg; then they might rely upon aid from Germany. If they would still not consent to this, they must raise 600,000 florins, or more, if they could." "The first," they answered, "was at variance with their conviction and their conscience; but means might perhaps be found to raise the money, if he would only let them know for what purpose he would use it.

"No!" cried he, with the utmost displeasure, "if I must tell you that, it is all over with the use of it." With these words he immediately broke off the conference, and dismissed the deputies.

The Prince of Orange was reproached with having squandered his fortune, and with favouring the innovations on account of his debts; but he asserted that he still enjoyed 60,000 florins yearly rental. Before his departure, he borrowed 20,000 florins from the states of Holland, on the mortgage of some manors. Men could hardly persuade themselves that he would have succumbed to necessity so entirely, and without an effort at resistance, given up all his hopes and schemes. But what he secretly meditated no one knew, no one had read in his heart. Being asked how he intended to conduct himself towards the King of Spain. "Quietly," was his answer, "unless he touches my honour or my estates." He left the Netherlands soon afterwards, and betook himself in retirement to the town of Dillenburg in Nassau, at which place he was born. He was accompanied to Germany by many hundreds, either as his servants or as volunteers, and was soon followed by Counts Hogstraten, Kuilemberg, and Bergen, who preferred to share a voluntary exile with him, rather than recklessly involve themselves in an uncertain destiny. In his departure the nation saw the flight of its guardian angel; many had adored, all had honoured him. With him the last stay of the Protestants gave way; they, however, had greater hopes from this man in exile, than from all the others together who remained behind. Even the Roman Catholics could not witness his departure without regret. Them also had he shielded from tyranny; he had not unfrequently protected them against the oppression of their own church, and he had rescued many of them from the sanguinary jealousy of their religious opponents. A few fanatics among the Calvinists, who were offended with his proposal of an alliance with their brethren, who avowed the Confession of Augsburg, solemnized with secret thanksgivings the day on which the enemy left them. 1567.

DECAY AND DISPERSION OF THE GEUSEN LEAGUE.

Immediately after taking leave of his friend, the Prince of Gaure hastened back to Brussels, to receive from the regent the reward of his firmness, and there in the excitement of the court, and in the sunshine of his good fortune, to dispel the light cloud which the earnest warnings of the Prince of Orange had cast over his natural gaiety. The flight of the latter now left him in possession of the stage. He had now no longer any rival in the republic to dim his glory. With redoubled zeal he wooed the transient favour of the court, above which he ought to have felt himself far exalted. All Brussels must participate in his joy. He gave splendid banquets and public entertainments, at which, the better to eradicate all suspicion from his mind, the regent herself frequently attended. Not content with having taken the required oath, he outstripped the most devout in devotion; outran the most zealous in zeal to extirpate the Protestant faith, and to reduce by force of arms the refractory towns of Flanders. He declared to his old friend, Count Hogstraten, as also to the rest of the Gueux, that he would withdraw from them his friendship for ever, if they hesitated any longer to return into the bosom of the church, and reconcile themselves with their king. All the confidential letters which had been exchanged between him and them were returned, and by this last step, the breach between them was made public and irreparable. Egmont's secession, and the flight of the Prince of Orange, destroyed the last hope of the Protestants and dissolved the whole league of the Gueux Its members vied with each other in readiness—nay, they could not soon enough abjure the covenant and take the new oath proposed to them by the government. In vain did the Protestant merchants exclaim at this breach of faith on the part of the nobles; their weak voice was no longer listened to, and all the sums were lost with which they had supplied the league.

The most important places were quickly reduced and garrisoned; the rebels had fled, or perished by the hand of the executioner; in the provinces no protector was left. All yielded to the fortune of the regent, and her victorious army was advancing against Antwerp. After a long and obstinate contest, this town had been cleared of the worst rebels; Hermann and his adherents took to flight; the internal storms had spent their rage. The minds of the people became gradually composed, and, no longer excited at will by every furious fanatic, began to listen to better counsels. The wealthier citizens earnestly longed for peace, to revive commerce and trade, which had suffered severely from the long reign of anarchy. The dread of Alva's approach worked wonders; in order to prevent the miseries, which a Spanish army would inflict upon the country, the people hastened to throw themselves on the gentler mercies of the regent. Of their own accord they despatched plenipotentiaries to Brussels, to negociate for a treaty and to hear her terms. Agreeably as the regent was surprised by this voluntary step, she did not allow herself to be hurried away by her joy. She declared that she neither could nor would listen to any overtures or representations until the town had received a garrison. Even this was no longer opposed, and Count Mansfeld marched in, the day after, with sixteen squadrons in battle array. A solemn treaty was now made between the town and duchess, by which the former bound itself to prohibit the Calvinistic form of worship, to banish all preachers of that persuasion, to restore the Roman Catholic religion to its former dignity, to decorate the despoiled churches with their former ornaments, to administer the old edicts as before, to take the new oath which the other towns had sworn to, and lastly to deliver into the hands of justice all who had been guilty of treason, in bearing arms, or taking part in the desecration of the churches. On the other hand, the regent pledged herself to forget all that had passed, and even to intercede for the offenders with the king. All those, who being dubious of obtaining pardon preferred bannishment, were to be allowed a month to convert their property into money, and place themselves in safety. From this grace, none were to be excluded but such as had been guilty of a capital offence, and who were excepted by the previous article. Immediately upon the conclusion of this treaty, all Calvinist and Lutheran preachers in Antwerp, and the adjoining territory, were warned by the herald to quit the country within twenty-four hours. All the streets and gates were now thronged with fugitives, who for the honour of their

God abandoned what was dearest to them, and sought a more peaceful home for their persecuted faith. Here husbands were taking an eternal farewell of their wives, fathers of their children; there whole families were preparing to depart. All Antwerp resembled a house of mourning; wherever the eye turned, some affecting spectacle of painful separation presented itself. A seal was set on the doors of the Protestant churches; the whole worship seemed to be extinct. The 10th of April (1567) was the day appointed for the departure of the preachers. In the town hall, where they appeared for the last time to take leave of the magistrate, they could not command their grief; but broke forth into bitter reproaches. They had been sacrificed, they exclaimed, they had been shamefully betrayed. But a time would come when Antwerp would pay dearly enough for this baseness. Still more bitter were the complaints of the Lutheran clergy, whom the magistrate himself had invited into the country, to preach against the Calvinists. Under the delusive representation that the king was not unfavourable to their religion, they had been seduced into a combination against the Calvinists, but as soon as the latter had been, by their co-operation, brought under subjection, and their own services were no longer required, they were left to bewail their folly, which had involved themselves and their enemies in common ruin.

A few days afterwards, the regent entered Antwerp in triumph, accompanied by a thousand Walloon horse, the Knights of the Golden Fleece, all the governors and counsellors, a number of municipal officers, and her whole court. Her first visit was to the cathedral, which still bore lamentable traces of the violence of the Iconoclasts, and drew from her many and bitter tears. Immediately afterwards four of the rebels, who had been overtaken in their flight, were brought in and executed in the public market-place. All the children who had been baptized after the Protestant rites were rebaptized by Roman Catholic priests; all the schools of heretics were closed, and their churches levelled to the ground. Nearly all the towns in the Netherlands followed the example of Antwerp, and banished the Protestant preachers. By the end of April, the Roman Catholic churches were repaired and embellished more splendidly than ever, while all the Protestant places of worship were pulled down, and every vestige of the proscribed belief obliterated in the seventeen provinces. The populace, whose sympathies are generally with the successful party, was now as active in accelerating the ruin of the unfortunate, as a short time before it had been furiously zealous in its cause; in Ghent, a large and beautiful church which the Calvinists had erected was attacked, and in less than an hour had wholly disappeared. From the beams of the roofless churches, gibbets were erected for those who had profaned the sanctuaries of the Roman Catholics. The places of execution were filled with corpses, the prisons with condemned victims, the high roads with fugitives. Innumerable were the victims of this year of murder; in the smallest towns fifty at least, in several of the larger as many as three hundred, were put to death, while no account was kept of the numbers in the open country who fell into the hands of the provost-marshal, and were immediately strung up as miscreants, without trial and without mercy.

The regent was still in Antwerp, when ambassadors presented themselves from the Electors of Brandenburg, Saxony, Hesse, Würtemberg, and Baden to intercede for their fugitive brethren in the faith. The expelled preachers of the Augsburg Confession had claimed the rights assured to them by the religious peace of the Germans, in which Brabant, as part of the empire, participated, and had thrown themselves on the protection of those princes. The arrival of the foreign ministers alarmed the regent, and she vainly endeavoured to prevent their entrance into Antwerp; under the guise, however, of showing them marks of honour, she continued to keep them closely watched, lest they should encourage the malcontents in any attempts against the peace of the town. From the high tone which they most unseasonably adopted towards the regent, it might almost be inferred that they were little in earnest in their demand. "It was but reasonable," they said, "that the Confession of Augsburg, as the only one, which met the spirit of the Gospel, should be the ruling faith in the Netherlands; but to persecute it by such cruel edicts as were in force was positively unnatural, and could not be allowed They therefore required of the regent, in the name of religion, not to treat the people, entrusted to her rule, with such severity. She replied through the Count of Staremberg, her minister for German affairs, that such an exordium deserved no answer at all. From the sympathy which the German princes had shown for the Belgian fugitives, it was clear that they gave less credit to the letters of the king, in explanation of his measures, than to the reports of a few worthless wretches who, in the desecrated churches, had left behind them a worthier memorial of their acts and characters. It would far more become them to leave to the King of Spain the care of his own subjects, and abandon the attempt to foster a spirit of rebellion in foreign countries, from which they would reap neither honour nor profit. The ambassadors left Antwerp in a few days without having effected anything. The Saxon minister, indeed, in a private interview with the regent, even assured her that his master had most reluctantly taken this step.

The German ambassadors had not quitted Antwerp, when intelligence from Holland completed the triumph of the regent. From fear of Count Megen, Count Brederode had deserted his town of Viane, and with the aid of the Protestant inhabitants had succeeded in throwing himself into Amsterdam, where his arrival caused great alarm to the city magistrate, who had previously found difficulty in preventing a revolt, while it revived the courage of the Protestants. Here Brederode's adherents increased daily, and many noblemen flocked to him from Utrecht, Friesland, and Gröningen, whence the victorious arms of Megen and Aremberg had driven them. Under various disguises, they found means to steal into the city, where they gathered round Brederode, and served him as a strong body-guard. The regent, apprehensive of a new outbreak, sent one of her private secretaries, Jacob de la Torre, to the Council of Amsterdam, and ordered them to get rid of Count Brederode on any terms, and at any risk Neither the magistrate nor de la Torre himself, who visited Brederode in person to acquaint him with the will of the duchess, could prevail upon him to depart. The secretary was even surprised in his own chamber by a party of Brederode's followers, and deprived of all his papers, and would, perhaps, have lost his life also, if he had not contrived to make his escape. Brederode remained in Amsterdam a full month after this occurrence, a powerless idol of the Protestants, and an oppressive burden to the Roman Catholics; while his fine army, which he had left in Viane, reinforced by many fugitives from the southern provinces, gave Count Megen enough to do without attempting to harass the Protestants in their flight. At last, Brederode resolved to follow the example of Orange, and yielding to necessity, abandon a desperate cause. He informed the town council that he was willing to leave Amsterdam, if they would enable him to do so by furnishing him with the pecuniary means. Glad to get quit of him, they hastened to borrow the money on the security of the town council. Brederode quitted Amsterdam the same night, and was conveyed in a gun-boat as far as Vlie, from whence he fortunately escaped to Embden. Fate treated him more mildly than the majority of those he had implicated in his foolhardy enterprise: he died the year after, 1568, at one of his castles in Germany, from the effects of drinking, by which he sought ultimately to drown his grief and disappointments. His widow, Countess of Moers in her own right, was remarried to the Prince Palatine, Frederick III. The Protestant cause lost but little by his demise; the work which he had commenced, as it had not been kept alive by him, so it did not die with him.

The little army, which in his disgraceful flight he had deserted, was bold and valiant, and had a few resolute leaders. It disbanded, indeed, as soon as he, to whom it looked for pay, had fled; but hunger and courage kept its parts together some time longer. One body, under the command of Dietrich of Battenburgh, marched to Amsterdam, in the hope of carrying that town; but Count Megen hastened with thirteen companies of excellent troops to its relief, and compelled the rebels to give up the attempt. Contenting themselves with plundering the neighbouring cloisters, among which the abbey of Egmont in particular was hardly dealt with, they turned off towards Waaterland, where they hoped the numerous swamps would protect them from pursuit. But thither Count Megen followed them, and compelled them, in all haste, to seek safety in the Zuyderzee. The brothers Van Battenburg, and two Friesan nobles, Beima and Galama, with a hundred and twenty men and the booty they had taken from the monasteries, embarked near the town of Hoorne, intending to cross to Friesland, but, through the treachery of the steersman, who ran the vessel on a sandbank near Harlingen they fell into the hands of one of Aremberg's captains, who took them all prisoners. The Count of Aremberg immediately pronounced sentence upon all the captives of plebeian rank, but sent his noble prisoners to the regent, who caused seven of them to be beheaded. Seven others of the most noble, including the brothers Van Battenburg and some Frieslanders, all in the bloom of youth, were reserved for the Duke of Alva, to enable him to signalize the commencement of his administration by a deed, which was in every way worthy of him. The troops in four other vessels which set sail from Medemblick, and were pursued by Count Megen in small boats, were more successful. A contrary wind had forced them out of their course, and driven them ashore on the coast of Gueldres, where they all got safe to land; crossing the Rhine near Heusen, they fortunately escaped into Cleves, where they tore their flags in pieces, and dispersed. In North Holland, Count Megen overtook some squadrons who had lingered too long in plundering the cloisters, and completely overpowered them. He afterwards formed a junction with Noircarmes, and garrisoned Amsterdam. The Duke Erich of Brunswick also surprised three companies, the last remains of the army of the Gueux, near Viane, where they were endeavouring to take a battery, routed them and captured their leader Rennesse, who was shortly afterwards beheaded at the castle of Freudenburg in Utrecht. Subsequently, when Duke Erich entered Viane, he found nothing but deserted streets. the inhabitants having left it with the garrison on the first alarm. He immediately razed the fortifications, and reduced this arsenal of the Gueux to an open town without defences. All the originators of the league were now dispersed; Brederode and Louis of Nassau had fled to Germany, and Counts Hogstraten, Bergen, and Kuilemberg had followed their example, Mansfeld had seceded, the brothers Van Battenburg awaited in prison an ignominious fate, while Thoulouse alone had found an honourable death on the field of battle. Those of the confederates who had escaped the sword of the enemy, and the axe of the executioner, had saved nothing but their lives, and thus the title which they had assumed for show, became at last a terrible reality.

Such was the inglorious end of the noble league, which in its beginning awakened such fair hopes, and promised to become a powerful protection against oppression. Unanimity was its strength; distrust and internal dissension its ruin. It brought to light and developed many rare and beautiful virtues; but it wanted the most indispensable of all, prudence and moderation, without which any undertaking must miscarry, and all the fruits of the most laborious industry perish. If its objects had been as pure as it pretended, or even had they remained as pure as they really were at its first establishment, it might have defied the unfortunate combination of circumstances which prematurely overwhelmed it; and even if unsuccessful, it would still have deserved an honourable mention in history. But it is too evident that the confederate nobles, whether directly or indirectly, took a greater share in the frantic excesses of the Iconoclasts than comported with the dignity and blamelessness of their confederation; and many among them openly exchanged their own good cause for the mad enterprise of these worthless vagabonds. The restriction of the Inquisition, and a mitigation of the cruel inhumanity of the edicts, must be laid to the credit of the league; but this transient relief was dearly purchased, at the cost of so many of the best and bravest citizens, who either lost their lives in the field, or in exile carried their wealth and industry to another quarter of the world; and of the presence of Alva and the Spanish arms Many, too, of its peaceable citizens, who, without its dangerous temptations, would never have been seduced from the ranks of peace and order, were beguiled by the hope of success into the most culpable enterprises, and by their failure plunged into ruin and misery. But it cannot be denied, that the league atoned in some measure for these wrongs by positive benefits It brought together and emboldened many whom a selfish pusillanimity kept asunder and inactive; it diffused a salutary public spirit amongst the Belgian people, which the oppression of the government had almost entirely extinguished, and gave unanimity and a common voice to the scattered members of the nation, the absence of which alone makes despots bold. The attempt, indeed, failed, and the knots, too carelessly tied, were quickly unloosed; but it was through such failures that the nation was eventually to attain to a firm and lasting union, which should bid defiance to change.

The total destruction of the Geusen army quickly brought the Dutch towns also back to their obedience, and in the provinces there remained not a single place which had not submitted to the regent; but the increasing emigration, both of the natives and the foreign residents, threatened the country with depopulation. In Amsterdam the crowd of fugitives was so great, that vessels were wanting to convey them across the North Sea and the Zuyderzee, and that flourishing emporiun beheld with dismay the approaching downfall of its prosperity. Alarmed at this general flight, the regent hastened to write letters to all the towns, to encourage the citizens to remain, and by fair promises to revive a hope of better and milder measures. In the king's name, she promised to all who would freely swear to obey the state and the church complete indemnity, and by public proclamation invited the fugitives to trust to the royal clemency and return to their homes. She engaged also to relieve the nation from the dreaded presence of a Spanish army, even if it were already on the frontiers; nay, she went so far as to drop hints that, if necessary, means might be found to prevent it by force from entering the provinces, as she was fully determined not to relinquish to another the glory of a peace which it had cost her so much labour to effect. Few, however, returned in reliance upon her word, and these few had cause to repent it in the sequel; many thousands had already quitted the country, and several thousands more quickly followed them. Germany and England were filled with Flemish emigrants, who, wherever they settled, retained their usages and manners, and even their costume, unwilling to come to the painful conclusion that they should never again see their native land, and to give up all hopes of return. Few carried with them any remains of their former affluence; the greater portion had to beg their way, and bestowed on their adopted country nothing but industrious skill and honest citizens.

And now the regent hastened to report to the king, tidings such as during her whole administration she had never before been able to gratify him with. She announced to him that she had succeeded in restoring quiet throughout the provinces, and that she thought herself strong enough to maintain it. The sects were extirpated, and the Roman Catholic worship re-established in all its former splendour; the rebels had either already met with, or were awaiting in prison, the punishment they deserved; the towns were secured by adequate garrisons. There was, therefore, no necessity for sending Spanish troops into the Netherlands, and nothing to justify their entrance. Their arrival would tend to destroy the existing repose, which it had cost so much to establish, would check the much-desired revival of commerce and trade, and while it would involve the country in new expenses, would, at the same time, deprive them of the only means of supporting them. The mere rumour of the approach of a Spanish army had stripped the country of many thousands of its most valuable citizens; its actual appearance would reduce it to a desert. As there was no longer any enemy to subdue, or rebellion to suppress, the people would see no motive for the march of this army but punishment and revenge; and, under this supposition, its arrival would neither be welcomed nor honoured. No longer excused by necessity, this violent expedient would assume the odious aspect of oppression, would exasperate the national mind afresh, drive the Protestants to desperation, and arm their brethren in other countries in their defence. The regent, she said, had, in the king's name, promised the nation it should be relieved from this foreign army, and to this stipulation she was principally indebted for the present peace; she could not, therefore, guarantee its long continuance if her pledge was not faithfully fulfilled. The Netherlands would receive him as their sovereign the king, with every mark of attachment and veneration; but he must come as a father to bless, not as a despot to chastise them. Let him come to enjoy the peace which she had bestowed on the country, but not to destroy it afresh.

ALVA'S ARMAMENT AND EXPEDITION TO THE NETHERLANDS

But it was otherwise determined in the council at Madrid. The minister Granvella, who, even while absent himself, ruled the Spanish cabinet by his adherents; the Cardinal Grand Inquisitor Spinosa, and the Duke of Alva swayed respectively by hatred, a spirit of persecution, or private interest, had outvoted the milder councils of the Prince Ruy Gomes of Eboli, the Count of Feria, and the king's confessor Fresneda. The insurrection, it was urged by the former, was indeed quelled for the present, but only because the rebels were awed by the rumour of the king's armed approach; it was to fear of punishment alone, and not to sorrow for their crime, that the present calm was to be ascribed, and it would soon again be broken if that feeling were allowed to subside. In fact, the offences of the people fairly afforded the king the opportunity he had so long desired, of carrying out his despotic views with an appearance of justice. The peaceable settlement for which the regent took credit to herself, was very far from according with his wishes, which sought rather for a legitimate pretext to deprive the provinces of their privileges, which were so obnoxious to his despotic temper.

With an impenetrable dissimulation, Philip had hitherto fostered the general delusion that he was about to visit the provinces in person, while, all along, nothing could have been more remote from his real intentions. Travelling at any time ill suited the methodical regularity of his life, which moved with the precision of clockwork; and his narrow and sluggish intellect was oppressed by the variety and multitude of objects with which new scenes crowded it. The difficulties and dangers which would attend a journey to the Netherlands must, therefore, have been peculiarly alarming to his natural timidity and love of ease. Why should he, who, in all that he did, was accustomed to consider himself alone, and to make men accommodate themselves to his principles, not his principles to men, undertake so perilous an expedition, when he could see neither the advantage nor necessity of it. Moreover, as it had ever been to him an utter impossibility to separate, even for a moment, his person from his royal dignity, which no prince ever guarded so tenaciously and pedantically as himself, so the magnificence and ceremony, which in his mind were inseparably connected with such a journey, and the expenses which, on this account, it would necessarily occasion, were of themselves sufficient motives to account for his indisposition to it, without its being at all requisite to call in the aid of the influence of his favourite, Ruy Gomes, who is said to have desired to separate his rival, the Duke of Alva, from the king. Little, however, as he seriously intended this journey, he still deemed it advisable to keep up the expectation of it, as well with a view of sustaining the courage of the loyal, as of preventing a dangerous combination of the disaffected, and stopping the further progress of the rebels.

In order to carry on the deception as long as possible, Philip made extensive preparations for his departure, and neglected nothing which could be required for such an event He ordered ships to be fitted out, appointed the officers and others to attend him. To allay the suspicion such warlike preparations might excite in all foreign courts, they were informed through his ambassadors of his real design. He applied to the King of France for a passage for himself and attendants through that kingdom, and consulted the Duke of Savoy as to the preferable route. He caused a list to be drawn up of all the towns and fortified places that lay in his march, and directed all the intermediate distances to be accurately laid down. Orders were issued for taking a map and survey of the whole extent of country between Savoy and Burgundy, the duke being requested to furnish the requisite surveyors and scientific officers. To such lengths was the deception carried, that the regent was commanded to hold eight vessels, at least, in readiness, off Zealand, and to despatch them to meet the king the instant she heard of his having sailed from Spain; and these ships she actually got ready, and caused prayers to be offered up in all the churches for the king's safety during the voyage, though, in secret, many persons did not scruple to remark that, in his chamber at Madrid, his majesty would not have much cause to dread the storms at sea. Philip played his part with such masterly skill, that the Belgian ambassadors in Madrid, Lords Bergen and Montigny, who at first had disbelieved in the sincerity of his pretended journey, began at last to be alarmed, and infected their friends in Brussels with similar apprehensions. An attack of tertian ague, which about this time the king suffered, or perhaps feigned, in Segovia, afforded a plausible pretence for postponing his journey, while, mean time, the preparations for it were carried on with the utmost activity. At last, when the urgent and repeated solicitations of his sister compelled him to make a definite explanation of his plans, he gave orders that the Duke of Alva should set out forthwith with an army, both to clear the way before him of rebels, and to enhance the splendour of his own royal arrival. He did not yet venture to throw off the mask, and announce the duke as his substitute. He had but too much reason to fear, that the submission which his Flemish nobles would cheerfully yield to their sovereign, would be refused to one of his servants, whose cruel character was well known, and who, moreover, was detested as a foreigner, and the enemy of their constitution. And, in fact, the universal belief that the king was soon to follow, which long survived Alva's entrance into the country, restrained the outbreak of disturbances which otherwise would assuredly have been caused by the cruelties which marked the very opening of the duke's government.

The clergy of Spain, and especially the Inquisition, contributed richly towards the expenses of this expedition, as to a holy war. Throughout Spain, the enlisting was carried on with the utmost zeal. The viceroys and governors of Sardinia. Sicily, Naples, and Milan, received orders to select the best of their Italian and Spanish troops in the garrisons, and despatch them to the general rendezvous in the Geneose territory, where the Duke of Alva would exchange them for the Spanish recruits which he should bring with him. At the same time, the regent was commanded to hold in readiness a few more regiments of German infantry in Luxembourg, under the command of the Counts Eberstein, Schaumburg, and Lodrona, and also some squadrons of light cavalry in the duchy of Burgundy, to reinforce the Spanish general immediately on his entrance into the provinces. The Count of Barlaimont was commissioned to furnish the necessary provision for the armament, and a sum of 200,000 gold florins was remitted to the regent, to enable her to meet these expenses, and to maintain her own troops.

The French court, however, under pretence of the danger to be apprehended from the Huguenots, had refused to allow the Spanish army to pass through France. Philip applied to the Dukes of Savoy and Lorraine, who were too dependent upon him to refuse his request. The former merely stipulated that he should be allowed to maintain 2,000 infantry and a squadron of horse at the king's expense, in order to protect his country from the injuries to which it might otherwise be exposed from the passage of the Spanish army. At the same time, he undertook to provide the necessary supplies for its maintenance during the transit

The rumour of this arrangement roused the Huguenots, the Genevese, the Swiss, and the Grisons. The Prince of Condé and the Admiral Coligny entreated Charles IX. not to neglect so favourable a moment of inflicting a deadly blow on the hereditary foe of France. With the aid of the Swiss, the Genevese, and his own Protestant subjects, it would, they alleged, be an easy matter to destroy the flower of the Spanish troops in the narrow passes of the Alpine mountains; and they promised to support him in this undertaking with an army of 50,000 Huguenots. This advice, however, whose dangerous object was not easily to be mistaken, was plausibly declined by Charles IX., who assured them that he was both able and anxious to provide for the security of his kingdom. He hastily despatched troops to cover the French frontiers; and the republics of Geneva, Bern, Zurich, and the Grisons, followed his example, all ready to offer a determined opposition to the dreaded enemy of their religion and their liberty.

On the 5th of May, 1567, the Duke of Alva set sail from Carthagena with thirty galleys, which had been furnished by Andrew Doria and the Duke Cosmo of Florence, and within eight days landed at Genoa, where the four regiments were waiting to join him. But a tertian ague, with which he was seized shortly after his arrival, compelled him to remain for some days inactive in Lombardy—a delay of which the neighbouring powers availed themselves to prepare for defence. As soon as the duke recovered, he held at Asti, in Montferrat, a review of all his troops, who were more formidable by their valour than by their numbers, since cavalry and infantry together did not amount to much above 10,000 men. In his long and perilous march, he did not wish to encumber himself with useless supernumeraries, which would only impede his progress and increase the difficulty of supporting his army. These 10,000 veterans were to form the nucleus of a greater army, which, according as circumstances and occasion might require, he could easily assemble in the Netherlands themselves.

This army, however, was as select as it was small. It consisted of the remains of those victorious legions, at whose head Charles V. had made Europe tremble; sanguinary, indomitable bands, in whose battalions the firmness of the old Macedonia phalanx lived again; rapid in their evolutions from long practice, hardy and enduring, proud of their leader's success, and confident from past victories, formidable by their licentiousness, but still more so by their discipline; let loose with all the passions of a warmer climate upon a rich and peaceful country, and inexorable towards an enemy whom the church had cursed. Their fanatical and sanguinary spirit, their thirst for glory and innate courage was aided by a rude sensuality, the instrument by which the Spanish general firmly and surely ruled his otherwise intractable troops With a prudent indulgence, he allowed riot and voluptuousness to reign throughout the camp. Under his tacit connivance, Italian courtezans followed the standards; even in the march across the Apennines, where the high price of the necessaries of life compelled him to reduce his force to the smallest possible number, he preferred to have a few regiments less, rather than to leave behind these instruments of voluptuousness *.

But industriously as Alva strove to relax the morals of his soldiers, he enforced the more rigidly a strict military discipline, which was interrupted only by a victory, or rendered less severe by a battle. For all this he had, he said, the authority of the Athenian General Iphicrates, who awarded the prize of valour to the pleasure-loving and rapacious soldier. The more irksome the restraint by which the passions of the soldiers were kept in check, the greater must have been the vehemence with which they broke forth at the sole outlet which was left open to them.

The duke divided his infantry, which was about 9,000 strong, and chiefly Spaniards, into four brigades, and gave the command of them to four Spanish officers. Alphonso of Ulloa led the Neapolitan brigade of nine companies, amounting to 3230 men; Sancho of Lodogno commanded the Milan brigade, 3200, men in ten companies; the Sicilian brigade with the same number of companies, and consisting of 1600

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* The bacchanalian procession of this army, contrasted strangely enough with the gloomy seriousness and pretended sanctity of its aim. The number of these women was so great that, to restrain the disorders and quarrelling among themselves, they hit upon the expedient of establishing a discipline of their own. They ranged themselves under particular flags, marched in ranks and sections, and in admirable military order, after each battalion, and classed themselves with strict etiquette according to their rank and pay.

men, was under Julian Romero, an experienced warrior, who had already fought on Belgian ground *; while Gonsalo of Braccamonte headed that of Sardinia, which was raised by three companies of recruits, to the full complement of the former. To every company, moreover, were added fifteen Spanish musqueteers. The horse, in all 1200 strong, consisted of three Italian, two Albanian, and seven Spanish squadrons, light and heavy cavalry, and the chief command was held by Ferdinand and Frederick of Toledo, the two sons of Alva. Chiappin Vitelli, Marquis of Cetona, was field-marshal; a celebrated general whose services had been made over to the King of Spain by Cosmo of Florence, and Gabriel Serbellon was general of artillery. The Duke of Savoy lent Alva an experienced engineer, Francis Pacotto, of Urbino, who was to be employed in the erection of new fortifications. His standard was likewise followed by a number of volunteers, and the flower of the Spanish nobility, of whom the greater part had fought under Charles V. in Germany, Italy, and before Tunis. Among these were Christopher Mondragone, one of the ten Spanish heroes, who near Mühlberg swam across the Elbe with their swords between their teeth, and under a shower of bullets from the enemy, brought over from the opposite shore the boats which the Emperor required for the construction of a bridge. Sancho of Avila, who had been trained to war under Alva himself, Camillo of Monte, Francis Ferdugo, Karl Davila, Nicolaus Basta, and Count Martinego, all fired with a noble ardour, either to commence their military career under so eminent a leader, or by another glorious campaign under his command, to crown the fame they had already won. After the review, the army marched in three divisions across Mount Cenis, by the very route which, sixteen centuries before, Hannibal is said to have taken. The duke himself led the van; Ferdinand of Toledo, with whom was associated Lodogno as colonel, the centre; and the Marquis of Cetona the rear. The Commissary General, Francis of Ibarra, was sent before with General Serbellon to open the road for the main body, and get ready the supplies at the several quarters for the night. The places which the van left in the

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* The same officer, who commanded one of the Spanish regiments, about which so much complaint had formerly been made in the States-General

morning were entered in the evening by the centre, which in its turn made room on the following day for the rear. Thus the army crossed the Alps of Savoy by regular stages, and with the fourteenth day completed that dangerous passage. A French army of observation accompanied it side by side along the frontiers of Dauphiné and the course of the Rhone, and the allied army of the Genevese followed it on the right, and was passed by it at a distance of seven miles. Both these armies of observation carefully abstained from any act of hostility, and were merely intended to cover their own frontiers. As the Spanish legions ascended and descended the steep mountain crags, or while they crossed the rapid Iser, or file by file wound through the narrow passes of the rocks, a handful of men would have been sufficient to have put an entire stop to their march, and to drive them back into the mountains, where they would have been irretrievably lost, since at each place of encampment supplies were provided for no more than a single day, and for a third part only of the whole force. But a supernatural awe and dread of the Spanish name appeared to have blinded the eyes of the enemy, so that they did not perceive their advantage, or at least did not venture to profit by it. In order to give them as little opportunity as possible of remembering it, the Spanish general hastened through this dangerous pass. Convinced, too, that if his troops gave the slightest umbrage he was lost, the strictest discipline was maintained during the march, not a single peasant's hut, not a single field was injured *; and never, perhaps, in the memory of man, was so numerous an army led so far in such excellent order. Destined as this army was for vengeance and murder, a malignant and baleful star seemed to conduct it safe through all dangers; and it would be difficult to decide whether the prudence of its general, or the blindness of its enemies is most to be wondered at

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* Once only on entering Lorraine, three horsemen ventured to drive away a few sheep from a flock, of which circumstance the duke was no sooner informed, than he sent back to the owner what had been taken from him, and sentenced the offenders to be hung. This sentence was, at the intercession of the Lorraine general, who had come to the frontiers to pay his respects to the duke, executed on only one of the three, upon whom the lot fell at the drumhead.

In Franche Comte, four squadrons of Burgundian cavalry newly raised joined the main army, which, at Luxembourg, was also reinforced by three regiments of German infantry under the command of Counts Eberstein, Schaumburg, and Lodrona. From Thionville, where he halted a few days, Alva sent his salutations to the regent by Francis of Ibarra, who was, at the same time, directed to consult her on the quartering of the troops. On her part, Noircarmes and Barlaimont were despatched to the Spanish camp to congratulate the duke on his arrival, and to show him the customary marks of honour At the same time they were directed to ask him to produce the powers entrusted to him by the king, of which, however, he only showed a part. The envoys of the regent were followed by swarms of the Flemish nobility, who thought they could not hasten soon enough to conciliate the favour of the new viceroy, or, by a timely submission, avert the vengeance which was preparing. Among them was Count Egmont. As he came forward, the duke pointed him out to the bystanders. "Here comes an arch-heretic," he exclaimed, loud enough to be heard by Egmont himself, who, surprised at these words, stopped and changed colour. But when the duke, in order to repair his imprudence, went up to him with a serene countenance, and greeted him with a friendly embrace, the Fleming was ashamed of his fears, and made light of this warning, by putting some frivolous interpretation upon it. Egmont sealed this new friendship with a present of two valuable chargers, which Alva accepted with a grave condescension.

Upon the assurance of the regent that the provinces were in the enjoyment of perfect peace, and that no opposition was to be apprehended from any quarter, the duke discharged some German regiments, which had hitherto drawn their pay from the Netherlands. Three thousand six hundred men, under the command of Lodrona, were quartered in Antwerp, from which town the Walloon garrison, in which full reliance could not be placed, was withdrawn; garrisons proportionably stronger were thrown into Ghent and other important places; Alva himself marched with the Milan brigade towards Brussels, whither he was accompanied by a splendid cortège of the noblest in the land.

Here. as in all the other towns of the Netherlands, fear and terror had preceded him, and all who were conscious of any offences, and even those who were sensible of none, alike awaited his approach with a dread similar to that with which criminals see the coming of their day of trial. All who could tear themselves from the ties of family, property, and country, had already fled, or now at last took to flight. The advance of the Spanish army had already, according to the report of the regent, diminished the population of the provinces by the loss of 100,000 citizens, and this general flight still continued. But the arrival of the Spanish general could not be more hateful to the people of the Netherlands, than it was distressing and dispiriting to the regent. At last, after so many years of anxiety, she had begun to taste the sweets of repose, and that absolute authority, which had been the long cherished object of eight years of a troubled and difficult administration. This late fruit of so much anxious industry, of so many cares and nightly vigils, was now to be wrested from her by a stranger, who was to be placed at once in possession of all the advantages which she had been forced to extract from adverse circumstances, by a long and tedious course of intrigue and patient endurance. Another was lightly to bear away the prize of promptitude, and to triumph by more rapid success over her superior but less glittering merits. Since the departure of the minister Granvella, she had tasted to the full the pleasures of independence. The flattering homage of the nobility, which allowed her more fully to enjoy the shadow of power, the more they deprived her of its substance, had, by degrees, fostered her vanity to such an extent, that she at last estranged by her coldness, even the most upright of all her servants, the state counsellor Viglius, who always addressed her in the language of truth. All at once, a censor of her actions was placed at her side, a partner of her power was associated with her, if indeed it was not rather a master who was forced upon her, whose proud, stubborn, and imperious spirit, which no courtesy could soften, threatened the deadliest wounds to her self-love and vanity. To prevent his arrival, she had, in her representations to the king, vainly exhausted every political argument. To no purpose had she urged, that the utter ruin of the commerce of the Netherlands would be the inevitable consequence of this introduction of the Spanish troops; in vain had she assured the king, that peace was universally restored, and reminded him of her own services in procuring it, which deserved, she thought, a better guerdon than to see all the fruits of her labours snatched from her and given to a foreigner, and more than all, to behold all the good which she had effected, destroyed by a new and different line of conduct. Even when the duke had already crossed Mount Cenis, she made one more attempt, entreating him at least to diminish his army; but that also failed, for the duke insisted upon acting up to the powers entrusted to him. In poignant grief she now awaited his approach, and with the tears she shed for her country, were mingled those of offended self-love.

On the 22nd of August, 1567, the duke of Alva appeared before the gates of Brussels. His army immediately took up their quarters in the suburbs, and he himself made it his first duty to pay his respects to the sister of his king She gave him a private audience, on the plea of suffering from sickness. Either the mortification she had undergone had in reality a serious effect upon her health, or what is not improbable, she had recourse to this expedient, to pain his haughty spirit, and in some degree to lessen his triumph. He delivered to her letters from the king, and laid before her a copy of his own appointment, by which the supreme command of the whole military force of the Netherlands was committed to him, and from which, therefore, it would appear, that the administration of civil affairs remained, as heretofore, in the hands of the regent. But as soon as he was alone with her, he produced a new commission which was totally different from the former. According to this, the power was delegated to him of making war at his discretion, of erecting fortifications, of appointing and dismissing at pleasure the governors of provinces, the commandants of towns, and other officers of the king, of instituting inquiries into the past troubles, of punishing those who originated them, and of rewarding the loyal. Powers of this extent, which placed him almost on a level with a sovereign prince, and far surpassed those of the regent herself, caused her the greatest consternation, and it was with difficulty that she could conceal her emotion. She asked the duke whether he had not even a third commission, or some special orders in reserve which went still further, and were drawn up still more precisely, to which he replied distinctly enough in the affirmative, but at the same time gave her to understand, that this commission might be too full to suit the present occasion, and would be better brought into play hereafter, with due regard to time and circumstances. A few days after his arrival, he caused a copy of the first instructions to be laid before the several councils and the states, and had them printed to ensure their rapid circulation. As the regent resided in the palace, he took up his quarters temporarily in Kuilemberg house, the same in which the association of the Gueux had received its name, and before which, through a wonderful vicissitude, Spanish tyranny now planted its flag.

A dead silence reigned in Brussels, broken only at times by the unwonted clang of arms. The duke had entered the town but a few hours, when his attendants, like blood-hounds that have been slipped, dispersed themselves in all directions. Everywhere foreign faces were to be seen; the streets were empty, all the houses carefully closed, all amusements suspended, all public places deserted. The whole metropolis resembled a place visited by the plague. Acquaintances hurried on without stopping for their usual greeting; all hastened on the moment a Spaniard showed himself in the streets. Every sound startled them, as if it were the knock of the officials of justice at their doors; the nobility, in trembling anxiety, kept to their houses; they shunned appearing in public, lest their presence should remind the new viceroy of some past offence. The two nations now seemed to have exchanged characters. The Spaniard had become the talkative man, and the Brabanter taciturn; distrust and fear had scared away the spirit of cheerfulness and mirth, a constrained gravity fettered even the play of the features. Every moment the impending blow was looked for with dread.

This general straining of expectation, warned the duke to hasten the accomplishment of his plans, before they should be anticipated by the timely flight of his victims. His first object was to secure the suspected nobles, in order, at once and for ever, to deprive the faction of its leaders, and the nation, whose freedom was to be crushed, of all its supporters. By a pretended affability, he had succeeded in lulling their first alarm, and in restoring Count Egmont, in particular, to his former perfect confidence, for which purpose he artfully employed his sons, Ferdinand and Frederick of Toledo, whose companionableness and youth assimilated more easily with the Flemish character. By this skilful device, he succeeded also in enticing Count Horn to Brussels, who had hitherto thought it advisable to watch the first measures of the duke from a distance, but now suffered himself to be seduced by the good fortune of his friend. Some of the nobility, and Count Egmont at the head of them, even resumed their former gay style of living. But they themselves did not do so with their whole hearts, and they had not many imitators. Kuilemberg house was incessantly besieged by a numerous crowd, who thronged around the person of the new viceroy, and exhibited an affected gaiety on their countenances, while their hearts were wrung with distress and fear. Egmont in particular assumed the appearance of a light heart, entertaining the duke's sons, and being fêted by them in return. Meanwhile, the duke was fearful lest so fair an opportunity for the accomplishment of his plans might not last long, and lest some act of imprudence might destroy the feeling of security, which had tempted both his victims voluntarily to put themselves into his power; he only waited for a third; Hogstraten also was to be taken in the same net. Under a plausible pretext of business, he therefore summoned him to the metropolis. At the same time, that he purposed to secure the three counts in Brussels, Colonel Lodrona was to arrest the burgomaster Strahlen in Antwerp, an intimate friend of the Prince of Orange, and suspected of having favoured the Calvinists; another officer was to seize the private secretary of Count Egmont, whose name was John Casembrot von Beckerzeel, as also some secretaries of Count Horn, and was to possess themselves of their papers.

When the day arrived which had been fixed upon for the execution of this plan, the duke summoned all the counsellors and knights before him, to confer with them upon matters of state. On this occasion, the Duke of Arschot, the Counts Mansfeld, Barlaimont, and Aremberg, attended on the part of the Netherlanders, and on the part of the Spaniards, besides the duke's sons, Vitelli, Serbellon, and Ibarra. The young Count Mansfeld, who likewise appeared at the meeting, received a sign from his father to withdraw with all speed, and by a hasty flight avoid the fate which was impending over him, as a former member of the Geusen league. The duke purposely prolonged the consultation, to give time before he acted for the arrival of the courtiers from Antwerp, who were to bring him the tidings of the arrest of the other parties. To avoid exciting any suspicion, the Engineer Paciotto was required to attend the meeting, to lay before it the plans for some fortifications. At last, intelligence was brought him that Lodrona had successfully executed his commission. Upon this the duke dexterously broke off the debate, and dismissed the council. And now, as Count Egmont was about to repair to the apartment of Don Ferdinand, to finish a game that he had commenced with him, the captain of the duke's body guard, Sancho D'Avila, stopped him, and demanded his sword in the king's name. At the same time, he was surrounded by a number of Spanish soldiers, who, as had been preconcerted, suddenly advanced from their concealment So unexpected a blow deprived Egmont, for some moments, of all powers of utterance and recollection; after a while, however, he collected himself, and taking his sword from his side with dignified composure, said, as he delivered it into the hands of the Spaniard, "This sword has before this, on more than one occasion, successfully defended the king's cause." Another Spanish officer arrested Count Horn, as he was returning to his house, without the least suspicion of danger. Horn's first inquiry was after Egmont. On being told that the same fate had just happened to his friend, he surrendered himself without resistance. "I have suffered myself to be guided by him," he exclaimed, "it is fair that I should share his destiny." The two counts were placed in confinement, in separate apartments. While this was going on in the interior of Kuilemberg house, the whole garrison was drawn out under arms in front of it. No one knew what had taken place inside, a mysterious terror diffused itself throughout Brussels, until rumour spread the news of this fatal event. Each felt as if he himself were the sufferer; with many, indignation at Egmont's blind infatuation, preponderated over sympathy for his fate; all rejoiced that Orange had escaped. The first question of the Cardinal Granvella, too, when these tidings reached him in

Rome, is said to have been, whether they had taken the Silent One also. On being answered in the negative, he shook his head: "then as they have let him escape they have got nothing." Fate ordained better for the Count of Hogstraten. Compelled by ill health to travel slowly, he was met by the report of this event, while he was yet on his way. He hastily turned back, and fortunately escaped destruction. Immediately after Egmont's seizure, a writing was extorted from him, addressed to the commandant of the citadel of Ghent, ordering that officer to deliver the fortress to the Spanish Colonel, Alphonso d'Ulloa. Upon this, the two counts were then (after they had been for some weeks confined in Brussels) conveyed under a guard of 3000 Spaniards to Ghent, where they remained imprisoned till late in the following year. In the mean time, all their papers had been seized. Many of the first nobility, who, by the pretended kindness of the Duke of Alva, had allowed themselves to be cajoled into remaining, experienced the same fate Capital punishment was also, without further delay, inflicted on all who, before the duke's arrival, had been taken with arms in their hands. Upon the news of Egmont's arrest a second body of about 20,000 inhabitants took up the wanderer's staff, besides the 100,000 who, prudently declining to await the arrival of the Spanish general, had already placed themselves in safety *. After so noble a life had been assailed, no one counted himself safe any longer; but many found cause to repent that they had so long deferred this salutary step; for every day flight was rendered more diffi-

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* A great part of these fugitives helped to strengthen the army of the Huguenots, who had taken occasion, from the passage of the Spanish army through Lorraine, to assemble their forces, and now pressed Charles IX hard. On these grounds, the French court thought it had a right to demand aid from the regent of the Netherlands. It asserted that the Huguenots had looked upon the march of the Spanish army as the result of a preconcerted plan, which had been formed against them by the two courts at Bayonne, and that this had roused them from their slumber. That consequently it behoved the Spanish court to assist in extricating the French king from difficulties, into which the latter had been brought, simply by the march of the Spanish troops. Alva actually sent the Count of Aremberg with a considerable force, to join the army of the Queen Mother in France, and even offered to command these subsidiaries in person, which, however, was declined. Strada, 206. Thuan, 541.

cult, for the duke ordered all the ports to be closed, and punished the attempt at emigration with death. The beggars were now esteemed fortunate, who had abandoned country and property, in order to preserve at least their liberty and their lives.

ALVA'S FIRST MEASURES, AND DEPARTURE OF THE DUCHESS OF PARMA.

Alva's first step, after securing the most suspected of the nobles, was to restore the Inquisition to its former authority; to put the decrees of Trent again in force, abolish the "*Moderation*," and promulgate anew the edicts against heretics in all their original severity The Court of Inquisition in Spain had pronounced the whole nation of the Netherlands guilty of treason in the highest degree; Catholics and heterodox, loyalists and rebels, without distinction; the latter as having offended by overt acts, the former as having incurred equal guilt by their supineness. From this sweeping condemnation a very few were excepted, whose names, however, were purposely reserved, while the general sentence was publicly confirmed by the king. Philip declared himself absolved from all his promises, and released from all engagements, which the regent, in his name, had entered into with the people of the Netherlands; and all the justice which they had in future to expect from him must depend on his own good will and pleasure. All who had aided in the expulsion of the minister Granvella, who had taken part in the petition of the confederate nobles, or had but even spoke in favour of it; all who had presented a petition against the decrees of Trent, against the edicts relating to religion, or against the installation of the bishops; all who had permitted the public preachings, or had only feebly resisted them; all who had worn the insignia of the Gueux, had sung Geusen songs, or who in any way whatsoever had manifested their joy at the establishment of the league; all who had sheltered or concealed the reforming preachers, attended Calvinistic funerals, or had even merely known of their secret meetings, and not given information of them, all who had appealed to the national privileges; all in fine who had expressed an opinion that they ought to obey God rather than man; all these, indiscriminately, were declared liable to the penalties which the law imposed upon any violation of the royal prerogative, and upon high treason, and these penalties were, according to the instruction which Alva had received, to be executed on the guilty persons. without forbearance or favour—without regard to rank, sex, or age, as an example to posterity, and for a terror to all future times. According to this declaration, there was no longer an innocent person to be found in the whole Neither lands, and the new viceroy had it in his power to make a fearful choice of victims. Property and life were alike at his command, and whoever should have the good fortune to preserve one or both, must receive them as the gift of his generosity and humanity. By this stroke of policy, as refined as it was detestable, the nation was disarmed, and unanimity rendered impossible As it absolutely depended on the duke's arbitrary will, upon whom the sentence should be carried in force, which had been passed without exception upon all, each individual kept himself quiet, in order to escape, if possible, the notice of the viceroy, and to avoid drawing the fatal choice upon himself. Every one, on the other hand, in whose favour he was pleased to make an exception, stood in a degree indebted to him, and was personally under an obligation, which must be measured by the value he set upon his life and property. As, however, this penalty could only be executed on the smaller portion of the nation, the duke naturally secured the greater by the strongest ties of fear and gratitude, and for one whom he sought out as a victim, he gained ten others whom he passed over. As long as he continued true to this policy, he remained in quiet possession of his rule, even amid the streams of blood which he caused to flow, and did not forfeit this advantage, till the want of money compelled him to impose a burden upon the nation, which oppressed all indiscriminately

In order to be equal to this bloody occupation, the details of which were fast accumulating, and to be certain of not losing a single victim through the want of instruments; and on the other hand to render his proceedings independent of the states, with whose privileges they were so much at variance, and who, indeed, were far too humane for him, he instituted an extraordinary court of justice. This court consisted of twelve criminal judges, who according to their instructions, to the very letter of which they must adhere, were to try and pronounce sentence upon those implicated in the past disturbances. The mere institution of such a board, was a violation of the liberties of the country, which expressly stipulated, that no citizen should be tried out of his own province; but the duke filled up the measure of his injustice, when, contrary to the most sacred privileges of the nation, he proceeded to give seats and votes in that court to Spaniards, the open and avowed enemies of Belgian liberty. He himself was the president of this court, and after him a certain Licentiate Vargas, a Spaniard by birth, of whose iniquitous character the historians of both parties are unanimous; cast out like a plague spot from his own country, where he had violated one of his wards, he was a shameless, hardened villain, in whose mind avarice, lust, and the thirst for blood, struggled for ascendancy. The principal members were Count Aremberg, Philip of Noircarmes, and Charles of Barlaimont, who, however, never sat in it; Hadrian Nicolai, Chancellor of Gueldres; Jacob Mertens, and Peter Asset, Presidents of Artois and Flanders; Jacob Hesselts, and John de la Porte, Counsellors of Ghent; Louis del Roi, Doctor of Theology, and by birth a Spaniard; John du Bois, King's Advocate; and De la Torre, Secretary of the Court. In compliance with the representations of Viglius, the Privy Council was spared any part in this tribunal; nor was any one introduced into it from the great council at Malines. The votes of the members were only recommendatory, not conclusive; the final sentence being reserved by the duke to himself. No particular time was fixed for the sitting of the court; the members, however, assembled at noon, as often as the duke thought good. But after the expiration of the third month, Alva began to be less frequent in his attendance, and at last resigned his place entirely to his favourite Vargas, who filled it with such odious fitness, that in a short time all the members, with the exception merely of the Spanish Doctor Del Rio, and the Secretary De la Torre *, weary of the atrocities

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* The sentences passed upon the most eminent persons (for example, the sentence of death passed upon Strahlen, the burgomaster of Antwerp) were signed only by Vargas, Del Rio, and De la Torre.

of which they were compelled to be both eyewitnesses and accomplices, remained away from the assembly. It is revolting to the feelings to think how the lives of the noblest and best were thus placed at the mercy of Spanish vagabonds, and how even the sanctuaries of the nation, its deeds and charters, were unscrupulously ransacked, the seals broken, and the most secret contracts between the sovereign and the state profaned and exposed*.

From the Council of Twelve, (which, from the object of its institution was called the Council for Disturbances, but, on account of its proceedings, is more generally known under the appellation of the Council of Blood, a name which the nation in their exasperation bestowed upon it,) no appeal was allowed. Its proceedings could not be revised. Its verdicts were irrevocable, and independent of all other authority. No other tribunal in the country could take cognizance of cases which related to the late insurrection, so that in all the other courts, justice was nearly at a standstill. The great council at Malines was as good as abolished; the authority of the Council of State entirely ceased, insomuch that its sittings were discontinued. On some rare occasions, the duke conferred with a few members of the late assembly, but even when this did occur, the conference was held in his cabinet, and was no more than a private consultation, without any of the proper forms being observed. No privilege, no charter of immunity, however carefully protected, had any weight with the Council for Disturbances†. It compelled all deeds and contracts to be laid before it, and often forced upon them the most strained interpretations and alterations. If the duke caused a sentence to be drawn out, which there was reason to fear might be opposed by the states of Brabant, it was legalized without the Brabant seal. The most sacred rights of individuals were assailed, and a tyranny without example forced its arbitrary will even into the circle of domestic life. As the Protestants and rebels had hitherto contrived to strengthen their party so much by marriages with the first families in the country, the duke issued an edict, forbidding all Netherlanders, whatever might be their rank or office, under pain of death and confiscation of property, to conclude a marriage without previously obtaining his permission.

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* For an example of the unfeeling levity with which the most important matters, even decisions in cases of life and death, were treated in this sanguinary council, it may serve to relate what is told of the Counsellor Hesselts. He was generally asleep during the meeting, and when his turn came to vote on a sentence of death, he used to cry out, still half asleep: "Ad patibulum! Ad patibulum!" so glibly did his tongue utter this word. It is further to be remarked of this Hesselts, that his wife, a daughter of the President Viglius, had expressly stipulated in the marriage contract, that he should resign the dismal office of attorney for the king, which made him detested by the whole nation. Vigl. ad Hopp. LXVII. L.

† Vargas, in a few words of barbarous Latin, demolished at once the boasted liberties of the Netherlands. "Non curamus vestros privilegios," he replied to one who wished to plead the immunities of the University of Louvain.

All, whom the Council for Disturbances thought proper to summon before it, were compelled to appear, clergy as well as laity, the most venerable heads of the senate, as well as the reprobate rabble of the Iconoclasts. Whoever did not present himself, as indeed scarcely anybody did, was declared an outlaw, and his property was confiscated; but those who were rash or foolish enough to appear, or who were so unfortunate as to be seized, were lost without redemption. Twenty, forty, often fifty were summoned at the same time and from the same town, and the richest were always the first on whom the thunderbolt descended. The meaner citizens, who possessed nothing that could render their country and their homes dear to them, were taken unawares, and arrested without any previous citation. Many eminent merchants, who had at their disposal fortunes of from 60,000 to 100,000 florins, were seen with their hands tied behind their backs, dragged like common vagabonds at the horse's tail to execution, and in Valenciennes, fifty-five persons were decapitated at one time. All the prisons, and the duke immediately on commencing his administration had built a great number of them, were crammed full with the accused; hanging, beheading, quartering, burning, were the prevailing and ordinary occupations of the day; the punishment of the galleys and banishment were more rarely heard of, for there was scarcely any offence, which was reckoned too trivial to be punished with death. Immense sums were thus brought into the treasury, which, however, served rather to stimulate the new viceroy's and his colleagues' thirst for gold, than to quench it. It seemed to be his insane purpose to make beggars of the whole people, and to throw all their riches into the hands of the king and his servants. The yearly income derived from these confiscations was computed to equal the revenues of the first kingdoms of Europe; it is said to have been estimated, in a report furnished to the king, at the incredible amount of 20,000,000 of dollars. But these proceedings were the more inhuman, as they often bore hardest precisely upon the very persons who were the most peaceful subjects, and most orthodox Roman Catholics, whom they could not want to injure. Whenever an estate was confiscated, all the creditors who had claims upon it were defrauded The hospitals, too, and public institutions, which such properties had contributed to support, were now ruined, and the poor, who had formerly drawn a pittance from this source, were compelled to see their only spring of comfort dried up. Whoever ventured to urge their well grounded claims on the forfeited property, before the Council of Twelve, (for no other tribunal dared to interfere with these inquiries,) consumed their substance in tedious and expensive proceedings, and were reduced to beggary before they saw the end of them. The histories of civilized states, furnish but one instance of a similar perversion of justice, of such violation of the rights of property, and of such waste of human life; but Cinna, Sylla, and Marius entered vanquished Rome as incensed victors, and practised without disguise, what the viceroy of the Netherlands performed under the venerable veil of the laws.

Up to the end of the year 1567, the king's arrival had been confidently expected, and the well disposed of the people had placed all their last hopes on this event. The vessels, which Philip had caused to be equipped expressly for the purpose of meeting him, still lay in the harbour of Flushing, ready to sail at the first signal; and the town of Brussels had consented to receive a Spanish garrison, simply because the king, it was pretended, was to reside within its walls But this hope gradually vanished, as he put off the journey from one season to the next. and the new viceroy very soon began to exhibit powers, which announced him less as a precursor of royalty, than as an absolute minister, whose presence made that of the monarch entirely superfluous. To complete the distress of the provinces, their last good angel was now to leave them in the person of the regent.

From the moment, when the production of the duke's extensive powers left no doubt remaining, as to the practical termination of her own rule, Margaret had formed the resolution of relinquishing the name also of regent. To see a successor in the actual possession of a dignity, which a nine years' enjoyment had made indispensable to her; to see the authority, the glory, the splendour, the adoration, and all the marks of respect, which are the usual concomitants of supreme power, pass over to another; and to feel that she had lost that, which she could never forget she had once held, was more than a woman's mind could endure; moreover, the Duke of Alva was of all men the least calculated to make her feel her privation the less painful, by a forbearing use of his newly acquired dignity. The tranquillity of the country, too, which was put in jeopardy by this divided rule, seemed to impose upon the duchess the necessity of abdicating. Many governors of provinces refused, without an express order from the court, to receive commands from the duke, and to recognise him as co-regent.

The rapid change of their point of attraction, could not be met by the courtiers so composedly and imperturbably, but that the duchess observed the alteration, and bitterly felt it. Even the few who, like State Counsellor Viglius, still firmly adhered to her, did so less from attachment to her person, than from vexation at being displaced by novices and foreigners, and from being too proud to serve a fresh apprenticeship under a new viceroy. But far the greater number, with all their endeavours to keep an exact mean, could not help making a difference between the homage they paid to the rising sun, and that which they bestowed on the setting luminary. The royal palace in Brussels became more and more deserted, while the throng at Kuilemberg House daily increased. But what wounded the sensitiveness of the duchess most acutely, was the arrest of Horn and Egmont, which was planned and executed by the duke, without her knowledge or consent, just as if there had been no such person as herself in existence. Alva did, indeed, after the act was done, endeavour to appease her, by declaring that the design had been purposely kept secret from her, in order to spare her name from being mixed up in so odious a transaction; but no such considerations of delicacy could close the wound which had been inflicted on her pride. In order at once, to escape all risk of similar insults, of which the prosent was probably only a forerunner, she despatched her private secretary Macchiavell to the court of her brother, there to solicit earnestly for permission to resign the regency. The request was granted without difficulty by the king, who accompanied his consent with every mark of his highest esteem. He would put aside (so the king expressed himself) his own advantage and that of the provinces, in order to oblige his sister. He sent her a present of 30,000 dollars, and allotted to her a yearly pension of 20,000 *. At the same time, a diploma was forwarded to the Duke of Alva, constituting him in her stead, viceroy of all the Netherlands, with unlimited powers.

Gladly would Margaret have learned that she was permitted to resign the regency before a solemn assembly of the states, a wish, which she had not very obscurely hinted to the king. But she was not gratified. She was particularly fond of solemnity, and the example of the Emperor her father, who had exhibited the extraordinary spectacle of his abdication of the crown in this very city, seemed to have great attractions for her As she was compelled to part with supreme power, she could scarcely be blamed for wishing to do so with as much splendour as possible. Moreover, she had not failed to observe how much the general hatred of the duke had effected in her own favour, and she looked, therefore, the more wistfully forward to a scene, which promised to be at once so flattering to her and so affecting. She would have been glad to mingle her own tears with those, which she hoped to see shed by the Netherlanders, for their good regent. Thus the bitterness of her descent from the throne, would have been alleviated by the expression of general sympathy. Little as she had done to merit the general esteem, during the nine years of her administration, while fortune smiled upon

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* Which, however, does not appear to have been very punctually paid, if a pamphlet may be trusted which was printed during her lifetime. (It bears the title: Discours sur la Blessure de Monseigneur Prince d'Orange, 1582, without notice of the place where it was printed, and is to be found in the Elector's library at Dresden.) She languished, it is there stated, at Namur in poverty, and so ill supported by her son, (the then governor of the Netherlands,) that her own secretary Aldrobandin called her sojourn there an exile. But the writer goes on to ask, what better treatment could she expect from a son, who, when still very young, being on a visit to her at Brussels, snapped his fingers at her, behind her back.

her, and the approbation of her sovereign was the limit to all her wishes, yet now the sympathy of the nation had acquired a value in her eyes, as the only thing which could in some degree compensate to her for the disappointment of all her other hopes Fain would she have persuaded herself that she had become a voluntary sacrifice to her goodness of heart, and her too humane feelings towards the Netherlanders. As, however, the king was very far from being disposed to incur any danger by calling a general assembly of the states, in order to gratify a mere caprice of his sister, she was obliged to content herself with a farewell letter to them. In this document, she went over her whole administration, recounted, not without ostentation, the difficulties with which she had had to struggle, the evils which, by her dexterity, she had prevented, and wound up at last. by saying that she left a finished work, and had to transfer to her successor nothing but the punishment of offenders. The king, too, was repeatedly compelled to hear the same statement, and she left nothing undone to arrogate to herself the glory of any future advantages, which it might be the good fortune of the Duke to realize. Her own merits, as something which did not admit of a doubt, but was at the same time a burden oppressive to her modesty, she laid at the feet of the king.

Dispassionate posterity may, nevertheless, hesitate to subscribe unreservedly to this favourable opinion. Even though the united voice of her contemporaries, and the testimony of the Netherlands themselves vouch for it, a third party will not be denied the right to examine her claims with stricter scrutiny. The popular mind, easily affected, is but too ready to count the absence of a vice as an additional virtue, and, under the pressure of existing evil, to give excess of praise for past benefits. The Netherlander seems to have concentrated all his hatred upon the Spanish name. To lay the blame of the national evils on the regent, would tend to remove from the king and his minister the curses, which he would rather shower upon them alone and undividedly; and the Duke of Alva's government of the Netherlands was, perhaps, not the proper point of view from which to test the merits of his predecessor. It was undoubtedly no light task to meet the king's expectations, without infringing the rights of the people, and the duties of humanity; but in struggling to effect these two contradictory objects, Margaret had accomplished neither. She had deeply injured the nation, while comparatively she had done little service to the king. It is true that she at last crushed the Protestant faction, but the accidental outbreak of the Iconoclasts assisted her in this, more than all her dexterity. She certainly succeeded by her intrigues in dissolving the league of the nobles, but not until the first blow had been struck at its roots by internal dissensions. The object, to secure which, she had for many years vainly exhausted her whole policy, was effected at last by a single enlistment of troops, for which, however, the orders were issued from Madrid. She delivered to the duke, no doubt, a tranquillized country; but it cannot be denied that the dread of his approach had the chief share in tranquillizing it. By her reports, she led the Council in Spain astray; because she never informed it of the disease, but only of the occasional symptoms; never of the universal feeling and voice of the nation, but only of the misconduct of factions. Her faulty administration, moreover, drew the people into the crime, because she exasperated, without sufficiently awing them. She it was that brought the murderous Alva into the country, by leading the king to believe that the disturbances in the provinces were to be ascribed, not so much to the severity of the royal ordinances, as to the unworthiness of those who were charged with their execution. Margaret possessed natural capacity and intellect; and an acquired political tact enabled her to meet any ordinary case; but she wanted that creative genius which, for new and extraordinary emergencies, invents new maxims, or wisely oversteps old ones. In a country where honesty was the best policy, she adopted the unfortunate plan of practising her insidious Italian policy, and thereby sowed the seeds of a fatal distrust in the minds of the people. The indulgence which has been so liberally imputed to her as a merit, was, in truth, extorted from her weakness and timidity by the courageous opposition of the nation; she had never departed from the strict letter of the royal commands, by her own spontaneous resolution; never did the gentle feelings of innate humanity lead her to misinterpret the cruel purport of her instructions Even the few concessions, to which necessity compelled her, were granted with an uncertain and shrinking hand, as if fearing to give too much; and she lost the fruit of her benefactions, because she mutilated them by a sordid closeness. What, in all the other relations of her life, she was too little, she was on the throne too much—a woman! She had it in her power, after Granvella's expulsion, to become the benefactress of the Belgian nation, but she did not. Her supreme good was the approbation of her king, her greatest misfortune his displeasure; with all the eminent qualities of her mind, she remained an ordinary character, because her heart was destitute of native nobility. She used a melancholy power with much moderation, and stained her government with no deed of arbitrary cruelty; nay, if it had depended on her, she would have always acted humanely. Years afterwards, when her idol, Philip II., had long forgotten her, the Netherlanders still honoured her memory; but she was far from deserving the glory which her successor's inhumanity reflected upon her

She left Brussels about the end of December, 1567. The duke escorted her as far as the frontiers of Brabant, and there left her under the protection of Count Mansfeld, in order to hasten back to the metropolis, and show himself to the Netherlanders as sole regent.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION

OF

COUNTS EGMONT AND HORN.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION

OF

COUNTS EGMONT AND HORN.

THE two counts were, a few weeks after their arrest, conveyed to Ghent, under an escort of 3000 Spaniards, where they were confined in the citadel for more than eight months. Their trial commenced in due form, before the Council of Twelve, and the Solicitor-General, John Du Bois, conducted the proceedings. The indictment against Egmont consisted of ninety counts, and that against Horn of sixty. It would occuppy too much space to introduce them here. Every action, however innocent, every omission of duty, was interpreted on the principle which had been laid down in the opening of the indictment, "that the two counts, in conjunction with the Prince of Orange, had planned the overthrow of the royal authority in the Netherlands, and the usurpation of the government of the country;" the expulsion of Granvella; the embassy of Egmont to Madrid; the confederacy of the Gueux; the concessions which they made to the Protestants in the provinces under their government; all were made to have a connexion with, and a reference to, this deliberate design. Thus importance was attached to the most insignificant occurrences, and one action made to darken and discolour another. By taking care to treat each of the charges as in itself a treasonable offence, it was the more easy to justify a sentence of high treason by the whole.

The accusations were sent to each of the prisoners, who were required to reply to them within five days. After doing so, they were allowed to employ solicitors and advocates, who were permitted free access to them; but as they were accused of treason, their friends were prohibited from visiting them. Count Egmont employed for his solicitor Von Landas, and made choice of a few eminent advocates from Brussels.

Their first step was to demur against the tribunal which was to try them, since, by the privilege of their Order, they, as Knights of the Golden Fleece, were amenable only to the king himself, the Grand Master. But this demurrer was overruled, and they were required to produce their witnesses, in default of which they were to be proceeded against *in contumaciam.* Egmont had satisfactorily answered to eighty-two counts, while Count Horn had refuted the charges against him, article by article. The accusation and the defence are still extant; on that defence, every impartial tribunal would have acquitted them both. The Procurator Fiscal pressed for the production of their evidence, and the Duke of Alva issued his repeated commands to use despatch. They delayed, however, from week to week, while they renewed their protests against the illegality of the court. At last, the duke assigned them nine days to produce their proofs; on the lapse of that period, they were to be declared guilty, and as having forfeited all right of defence.

During the progress of the trial, the relations and friends of the two counts were not idle. Egmont's wife, by birth a duchess of Bavaria, addressed petitions to the princes of the German empire, to the Emperor, and to the King of Spain. The Countess Horn, mother of the imprisoned count, who was connected by the ties of friendship or of blood with the principal royal families of Germany, did the same. All alike protested loudly against this illegal proceeding, and appealed to the liberty of the German empire, on which Horn, as a count of the empire, had special claims; the liberty of the Netherlands, and the privileges of the Order of the Golden Fleece were likewise insisted upon. The Countess Egmont succeeded in obtaining the intercession of almost every German court in behalf of her husband. The King of Spain and his viceroy were besieged by applications in behalf of the accused, which were referred from one to the other, and made light of by both. Countess Horn collected certificates from all the Knights of the Golden Fleece in Spain, Germany, and Italy, to prove the privileges of the Order. Alva rejected them, with a declaration that they had no force in such a case as the present. "The crimes of which the counts are accused, relate to the affairs of the Belgian provinces, and he, the duke, was appointed by the king sole judge of all matters connected with those countries."

Four months had been allowed to the Solicitor-General to draw up the indictment, and five were granted to the two counts to prepare for their defence. But instead of losing their time and trouble in adducing their evidence, which, perhaps, would have profited them but little, they preferred wasting it in protests against the judges, which availed them still less. By the former course, they would probably have delayed the final sentence, and in the time thus gained, the powerful intercession of their friends might perhaps have not been ineffectual. By obstinately persisting in denying the competency of the tribunal which was to try them, they furnished the duke with an excuse for cutting short the proceedings. After the last assigned period had expired, on the 1st of June, 1568, the Council of Twelve declared them guilty, and on the 4th of that month, sentence of death was pronounced against them.

The execution of twenty-five noble Netherlanders, who were beheaded in three successive days, in the market place at Brussels, was the terrible prelude to the fate of the two counts. John Casembrot von Beckerzeel, Secretary to Count Egmont, was one of the unfortunates, who was thus rewarded for his fidelity to his master, which he stedfastly maintained even upon the rack, and for his zeal in the service of the king, which he had manifested against the Iconoclasts. The others had either been taken prisoners, with arms in their hands, in the insurrection of the "Gueux," or apprehended and condemned as traitors, on account of having taken a part in the petition of the nobles.

The duke had reason to hasten the execution of the sentence. Count Louis of Nassau had given battle to the Count of Aremberg, near the monastery of Heiligerlee in Gröningen, and had the good fortune to defeat him. Immediately after his victory, he had advanced against Gröningen, and laid siege to it. The success of his arms had raised the courage of his faction, and the Prince of Orange, his brother, was close at hand with an army to support him. These circumstances made the duke's presence necessary in those distant provinces; but he could not venture to leave Brussels, before the fate of two such important prisoners was decided. The whole nation loved them, which was not a little increased by their unhappy fate. Even the strict Papists disapproved of the execution of these eminent nobles. The slightest advantage which the arms of the rebels might gain over the duke, or even the report of a defeat, would cause a revolution in Brussels, which would immediately set the two counts at liberty. Moreover, the petitions and intercessions which came to the viceroy, as well as to the King of Spain, from the German princes, increased daily; nay, the Emperor Maximilian II. himself caused the countess to be assured "that she had nothing to fear for the life of her spouse." These powerful applications might at last turn the king's heart in favour of the prisoners. The king might, perhaps, in reliance on his viceroy's usual dispatch, put on the appearance of yielding to the representations of so many sovereigns, and rescind the sentence of death, under the conviction that his mercy would come too late. These considerations moved the duke not to delay the execution of the sentence, as soon as it was pronounced.

On the day after the sentence was passed, the two counts were brought, under an escort of 3,000 Spaniards, from Ghent to Brussels, and placed in confinement in the *Brodhause*, in the great market place. The next morning the Council of Twelve were assembled; the duke, contrary to his custom, attended in person, and both the sentences, in sealed envelopes, were opened, and publicly read by Secretary Pranz. The two counts were declared guilty of treason, as having favoured and promoted the abominable conspiracy of the Prince of Orange, protected the confederated nobles, and been convicted of various misdemeanors against their king, and the church, in their governments and other appointments. Both were sentenced to be publicly beheaded, and their heads were to be fixed upon pikes, and not taken down without the duke's express command. All their possessions, fiefs, and rights escheated to the royal treasury. The sentence was signed only by the Duke and the Secretary Pranz, without asking or caring for the consent of the other members of the council.

During the night between the 4th and 5th of June, the sentences were brought to the prisoners, after they had already gone to rest. The duke gave them to the Bishop of Ypres, Martin Rithov, whom he had expressly summoned to Brussels to prepare the prisoners for death. When the bishop received this commission, he threw himself at the feet of the duke, and supplicated him with tears in his eyes for mercy—at least for respite for the prisoners; but he was answered in a rough and angry voice, that he had been sent for from Ypres, not to oppose the sentence, but by his spiritual consolation to reconcile the unhappy noblemen to it.

Egmont was the first to whom the bishop communicated the sentence of death. "That is, indeed, a severe sentence!' exclaimed the count, turning pale, and with a faltering voice. "I did not think that I had offended his majesty so deeply as to deserve such treatment. If, however, it must be so, I submit to my fate with resignation. May this death atone for my offence, and save my wife and children from suffering! This, at least, I think I may claim for my past services. As for death, I will meet it with composure, since it so pleases God and my king." He then pressed the bishop to tell him seriously and candidly if there was no hope of pardon. Being answered in the negative, he confessed and received the sacrament from the priest, repeating after him the mass with great devoutness. He asked what prayer was the best and most effective to recommend him to God in his last hour. On being told that no prayer could be more effectual than the one which Christ himself had taught, he prepared immediately to repeat the Lord's prayer. The thoughts of his family interrupted him; he called for pen and ink, and wrote two letters, one to his wife, the other to the king; the latter was as follows:

"Sire,—This morning I have heard the sentence which your majesty has been pleased to pass upon me. Far as I have ever been from attempting any thing against the person or the service of your majesty, or against the only true, old, and Catholic religion; I yet submit myself with patience to the fate which it has pleased God to ordain I should suffer. If, during the past disturbances, I have omitted, advised, or done any thing that seems at variance with my duty, it was most assuredly performed with the best intentions, or was forced upon me by the pressure of circumstances. I therefore pray your majesty to forgive me, and in consideration of my past services, show mercy to my unhappy wife, my poor children, and servants. In a firm hope of this, I commend myself to the infinite mercy of God.

"Your Majesty's most faithful vassal and servant,

"LAMORAL COUNT EGMONT.

"Brussels, June 5th, 1568, near my last moments."

This letter he placed in the hands of the bishop, with the strongest injunctions for its safe delivery; and for greater security, he sent a duplicate in his own handwriting to State Counsellor Viglius, the most upright man in the senate, by whom, there is no doubt, it was actually delivered to the king. The family of the count were subsequently reinstated in all his property, fiefs, and rights, which, by virtue of the sentence, had escheated to the royal treasury.

Meanwhile, a scaffold had been erected in the market place, before the town hall, on which two poles were fixed with iron spikes, and the whole covered with black cloth. Two-and-twenty companies of the Spanish garrison surrounded the scaffold, a precaution which was by no means superfluous. Between ten and eleven o'clock, the Spanish guard appeared in the apartment of the count; they were provided with cords to tie his hands according to custom. He begged that this might be spared him, and declared that he was willing and ready to die. He himself cut off the collar from his doublet to facilitate the executioner's duty. He wore a robe of red damask, and over that a black Spanish cloak trimmed with gold lace. In this dress he appeared on the scaffold, and was attended by Don Julian Romero, Maitre de Camp; Salinas, a Spanish captain; and the Bishop of Ypres. The Grand Provost of the court, with a red wand in his hand, sat on horseback at the foot of the scaffold; the executioner was concealed beneath.

Egmont had at first shown a desire to address the people from the scaffold. He desisted, however, on the bishop's representing to him that, either he would not be heard, or that if he were, he might, such at present was the dangerous disposition of the people, excite them to acts of violence, which would only plunge his friends into destruction. For a few moments he paced the scaffold with noble dignity, and lamented that it had not been permitted him to die a more honourable death for his king and his country. Up to the last he seemed unable to persuade himself that the king was in earnest, and that his severity would be carried any further than the mere terror of execution. When the decisive period approached, and he was to receive the Extreme Unction, he looked wistfully round, and when there still appeared no prospect of a reprieve, he turned to Julian Romero, and asked him once more if there was no hope of pardon for him Julian Romero shrugged his shoulders, looked on the ground, and was silent.

He then closely clenched his teeth, threw off his mantle and robe, knelt upon the cushion, and prepared himself for the last prayer. The bishop presented him the crucifix to kiss, and administered to him Extreme Unction, upon which the count made him a sign to leave him. He drew a silk cap over his eyes, and awaited the stroke. Over the corpse and the streaming blood, a black cloth was immediately thrown.

All Brussels thronged around the scaffold, and the fatal blow seemed to fall on every heart. Loud sobs alone broke the appalling silence. The duke himself, who watched the execution from a window of the town house, wiped his eyes as his victim died.

Shortly afterwards, Count Horn advanced on the scaffold. Of a more violent temperament than his friend, and stimulated by stronger reasons for hatred against the king, he had received the sentence with less composure, although in his case, perhaps, it was less unjust. He burst forth in bitter reproaches against the king, and the bishop with difficulty prevailed upon him to make a better use of his last moments, than to abuse them in imprecations on his enemies. At last, however, he became more collected, and made his confession to the bishop, which at first he was disposed to refuse.

He mounted the scaffold with the same attendants as his friend. In passing, he saluted many of his acquaintances; his hands were, like Egmont's, free, and he was dressed in a black doublet and cloak, with a Milan cap of the same colour upon his head. When he had ascended, he cast his eyes upon the corpse, which lay under the cloth, and asked one of the bystanders if it was the body of his friend. On being answered in the affirmative, he said some words in Spanish, threw his cloak from him, and knelt upon the cushion. All shrieked aloud as he received the fatal blow.

The heads of both were fixed upon the poles which were set up on the scaffold, where they remained until past three in the afternoon, when they were taken down, and, with the two bodies, placed in leaden coffins and deposited in a vault.

In spite of the number of spies and executioners who surrounded the scaffold, the citizens of Brussels would not be prevented from dipping their handkerchiefs in the streaming blood, and carrying home with them these precious memorials

SIEGE OF ANTWERP

BY THE PRINCE OF PARMA,

IN THE YEARS 1584 AND 1585.

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It is an interesting spectacle to observe the struggle of man's inventive genius in conflict with powerful opposing elements, and to see the difficulties, which are insurmountable to ordinary capacities, overcome by prudence, resolution, and a determined will. Less attractive, but only the more instructive, perhaps, is the contrary spectacle, where the absence of those qualities renders all efforts of genius vain, throws away all the favours of fortune, and where inability to improve such advantages renders hopeless a success which otherwise seemed sure and inevitable. Examples of both kinds are afforded by the celebrated siege of Antwerp, by the Spaniards, towards the close of the sixteenth century, by which that flourishing city was for ever deprived of its commercial prosperity, but which, on the other hand, conferred immortal fame on the general who undertook and accomplished it.

Twelve years had the war continued, which the northern provinces of Belgium had commenced at first in vindication simply of their religious freedom, and the privileges of their states, from the encroachments of the Spanish viceroy, but maintained latterly in the hope of establishing their independence of the Spanish crown. Never completely victors, but never entirely vanquished, they wearied out the Spanish valour by tedious operations on an unfavourable soil, and exhausted the wealth of the sovereign of both the Indies, while they themselves were called beggars, and in a degree actually were so. The League of Ghent, which had united the whole Netherlands, Roman Catholic and Protestant, in a common and (could such a confederation have lasted) invincible body, was indeed dissolved; but in place of this uncertain and unnatural combination, the northern provinces had, in the year 1579, formed among themselves the closer Union of Utrecht, which promised to be more lasting, inasmuch as it was linked and held together by common political and religious interests. What the new republic had lost in extent, through this separation from the Roman Catholic provinces, it was fully compensated for by the closeness of alliance, the unity of enterprise, and energy of execution; and, perhaps, it was fortunate in thus timely losing what no exertion, probably, would ever have enabled it to retain.

The greater part of the Walloon provinces had, in the year 1584, partly by voluntary submission, and partly by force of arms, been again reduced under the Spanish yoke. The northern districts alone had been able at all successfully to oppose it. A considerable portion of Brabant and Flanders still obstinately held out against the arms of the Duke Alexander of Parma, who at that time administered the civil government of the provinces, and the supreme command of the army, with equal energy and prudence, and, by a series of splendid victories, had revived the military reputation of Spain. The peculiar formation of the country, which, by its numerous rivers and canals, facilitated the connexion of the towns with one another and with the sea, baffled all attempts effectually to subdue it, and the possession of one place could only be maintained by the occupation of another. So long as this communication was kept up, Holland and Zealand could with little difficulty assist their allies, and supply them abundantly by water as well as by land with all necessaries, so that valour was of no use, and the strength of the king's troops was fruitlessly wasted on tedious sieges.

Of all the towns in Brabant, Antwerp was the most important, as well from its wealth, its population, and its military force, as by its position on the mouth of the Scheldt. This great and populous town, which at this date contained more than 80,000 inhabitants, was one of the most active members of the national league, and had in the course of the war distinguished itself above all the towns of Belgium, by an untameable spirit of liberty. As it fostered within its bosom all the three Christian churches, and owed much of its prosperity to this unrestricted religious liberty, it had the more cause to dread the Spanish rule, which threatened to abolish this toleration, and by the terror of the Inquisition to drive all the Protestant merchants from its markets. Moreover, it had had but too terrible experience of the brutality of the Spanish garrisons, and it was quite evident that if it once more suffered this insupportable yoke to be imposed upon it, it would never again, during the whole course of the war, be able to throw it off.

But powerful as were the motives which stimulated Antwerp to resistance, equally strong were the reasons which determined the Spanish general to make himself master of the place at any cost. On the possession of this town depended, in a great measure, that of the whole province of Brabant, which by this channel chiefly derived its supplies of corn from Zealand, while the capture of this place would secure to the victor the command of the Scheldt. It would also deprive the League of Brabant, which held its meetings in the town, of its principal support; the whole faction of its dangerous influence, of its example, its counsels, and its money, while the treasures of its inhabitants would open plentiful supplies for the military exigencies of the king. Its fall would, sooner or later, necessarily draw after it that of all Brabant, and the preponderance of power in that quarter would decide the whole dispute in favour of the king. Determined by these grave considerations, the Duke of Parma drew his forces together in July, 1584, and advanced from his position at Dornick to the neighbourhood of Antwerp, with the intention of investing it.

But both the natural position and fortifications of the town appeared to defy attacks. Surrounded on the side of Brabant with insurmountable works and moats, and towards Flanders covered by the broad and rapid stream of the Scheldt, it could not be carried by storm; and to blockade a town of such extent, seemed to require a land force three times larger than that which the duke had, and moreover a fleet, of which he was utterly destitute. Not only did the river yield the town all necessary supplies from Ghent, it also opened an easy communication with the bordering province of Zealand. For, as the tide of the North Sea extends far up the Scheldt, and ebbs and flows regularly, Antwerp enjoys the peculiar advantage, that the same tide flows past it at different times in two opposite directions. Besides, the adjacent towns of Brussels, Malines, Ghent, Dendermonde, and others, were all at this time in the hands of the league, and could aid the place from the land side also. To blockade, therefore, the town by land, and to cut off its communication with Flanders and Brabant, required two different armies, one on each bank of the river. A sufficient fleet was likewise needed to guard the passage of the Scheldt, and to prevent all attempts at relief, which would most certainly be made from Zealand. But by the war which he had still to carry on in other quarters, and by the numerous garrisons which he was obliged to leave in the towns and fortified places, the army of the duke was reduced to 10,000 infantry and 1700 horse, a force very inadequate for an undertaking of such magnitude. Moreover, these troops were deficient in the most necessary supplies, and the long arrears of pay had excited them to subdued murmurs, which hourly threatened to break out into open mutiny. If, notwithstanding these difficulties, he should still attempt the siege, there would be much occasion to fear from the strongholds of the enemy, which were left in the rear, and from which it would be easy, by vigorous sallies, to annoy an army distributed over so many places, and to expose it to want by cutting off its supplies.

All these considerations were brought forward by the council of war, before which the Duke of Parma now laid his scheme. However great the confidence which they placed in themselves, and in the proved abilities of such a leader, nevertheless, the most experienced generals did not disguise their despair of a fortunate result. Two only were exceptions, Capizucchi and Mondragone, whose ardent courage placed them above all apprehensions, the rest concurred in dissuading the duke from attempting so hazardous an enterprise, by which they ran the risk of forfeiting the fruit of all their former victories, and tarnishing the glory they had already earned.

But objections, which he had already made to himself and refuted, could not shake the Duke of Parma in his purpose. Not in ignorance of its inseparable dangers, not from thoughtlessly overvaluing his forces, had he taken this bold resolve

But that instinctive genius, which leads great men by paths which inferior minds either never enter upon or never finish, raised him above the influence of the doubts which a cold and narrow prudence would oppose to his views, and without being able to convince his generals, he felt the correctness of his calculations in a conviction indistinct, indeed, but not on that account less indubitable. A succession of fortunate results had raised his confidence, and the sight of his army, unequalled in Europe for discipline, experience, and valour, and commanded by a chosen body of the most distinguished officers, did not permit him to entertain fear for a moment. To those who objected to the small number of his troops, he answered, that however long the pike, it is only the point that kills; and that in military enterprise, the moving power was of more importance than the mass to be moved. He was aware, indeed, of the discontent of his troops, but he knew also their obedience; and he thought, moreover, that the best means to stifle their murmurs was by keeping them employed in some important undertaking, by stimulating their desire of glory by the splendour of the enterprise, and their rapacity, by hopes of the rich booty which the capture of so wealthy a town would hold out.

In the plan which he now formed for the conduct of the siege, he endeavoured to meet all these difficulties. Famine was the only instrument by which he could hope to subdue the town; but effectually to use this formidable weapon, it would be expedient to cut off all its land and water communications. With this view, the first object was to stop, or at least to impede, the arrival of supplies from Zealand. It was, therefore, requisite not only to carry all the outworks, which the people of Antwerp had built on both shores of the Scheldt for the protection of their shipping; but also, wherever feasible, to throw up new batteries, which should command the whole course of the river: and to prevent the place from drawing supplies from the land side, while efforts were being made to intercept their transmission by sea, all the adjacent towns of Brabant and Flanders were comprehended in the plan of the siege, and the fall of Antwerp was based on the destruction of all those places. A bold, and considering the duke's scanty force, an almost extravagant project, which was, however, justified by the genius of its author, and crowned by fortune with a brilliant result.

As, however, time was required to accomplish a plan of this magnitude, the Prince of Parma was content, for the present, with the erection of numerous forts on the canals and rivers which connected Antwerp with Dendermonde, Ghent, Malines, Brussels, and other places. Spanish garrisons were quartered in the vicinity, and almost at the very gates of those towns, which laid waste the open country, and by their incursions kept the surrounding territory in alarm. Thus, round Ghent alone, were encamped about 3000 men, and proportionate numbers round the other towns. In this way, and by means of the secret understanding, which he maintained with the Roman Catholic inhabitants of those towns, the duke hoped, without weakening his own forces, gradually to exhaust their strength, and by the harassing operations of a petty but incessant warfare, even without any formal siege, to reduce them at last to capitulate.

In the mean time, the main force was directed against Antwerp, which he now closely invested. He fixed his head quarters at Bevern in Flanders, a few miles from Antwerp, where he found a fortified camp. The protection of the Flemish bank of the Scheldt was intrusted to the Margrave of Rysburg, general of cavalry, the Brabant bank to the Count Peter Ernest Von Eansfeld, who was joined by another Spanish leader, Mondragone. Both the latter succeeded in crossing the Scheldt upon pontoons, notwithstanding the Flemish admiral's ship was sent to oppose them, and passing Antwerp, took up their position at Stabroek, in Bergen. Detached corps dispersed themselves along the whole Brabant side, partly to secure the dykes and the roads.

Some miles below Antwerp, the Scheldt was guarded by two strong forts, of which one was situated at Liefkenshoek, on the island Doel, in Flanders, the other at Lillo, exactly opposite the coast of Brabant. The last had been erected by Mondragone himself, by order of the Duke of Alva, when the latter was still master of Antwerp, and for this very reason the Duke of Parma now entrusted to him the attack upon it. On the possession of these two forts the success of the siege seemed wholly to depend, since all the vessels sailing from Zealand to Antwerp must pass under their guns. Both forts had, a short time before, been strengthened by the besieged, and the former was scarcely finished when the Margrave of Rysburg attacked it. The celerity with which he went to work, surprised the enemy before they were sufficiently prepared for defence; and a brisk assault quickly placed Liefkenshoek in the hands of the Spaniards. The confederates sustained this loss on the same fatal day that the Prince of Orange fell at Delft, by the hands of an assassin. The other batteries, erected on the island of Doel, were partly abandoned by their defenders, partly taken by surprise, so that in a short time the whole Flemish side was cleared of the enemy. But the fort at Lillo, on the Brabant shore, offered a more vigorous resistance, since the people of Antwerp had had time to strengthen its fortifications, and to provide it with a strong garrison. Furious sallies of the besieged, led by Odets von Teligny, supported by the cannon of the fort, destroyed all the works of the Spaniards, and an inundation, which was effected by opening the sluices, finally drove them away from the place after a three weeks' siege, and with the loss of nearly two thousand killed They now retired into their fortified camp at Stabroek, and contented themselves with taking possession of the dams, which run across the lowlands of Bergen, and oppose a breastwork to the encroachments of the East Scheldt.

The failure of his attempt upon the fort of Lillo compelled the Prince of Parma to change his measures. As he could not succeed in stopping the passage of the Scheldt by his original plan, on which the success of the siege entirely depended, he determined to effect his purpose by throwing a bridge across the whole breadth of the river. The thought was bold, and there were many who held it to be rash. Both the breadth of the stream, which at this part exceeds 1,200 paces, as well as its violence, which is still further augmented by the tides of the neighbouring sea, appeared to render every attempt of this kind impracticable. Moreover, he had to contend with a deficiency of timber, vessels, and workmen, as well as with the dangerous position between the fleets of Antwerp and of Zealand, to which it would necessarily be an easy task, in combination with a boisterous element, to inter rupt so tedious a work. But the Prince of Parma knew his power, and his settled resolution would yield to nothing short of absolute impossibility. After he had caused the breadth as well as the depth of the river to be measured, and had consulted with two of his most skilful engineers, Barocci and Plato, it was settled that the bridge should be constructed between Calloo in Flanders, and Ordam in Brabant. This spot was selected, because the river is here narrowest, and bends a little to the right, and so detains vessels awhile, by compelling them to tack. To cover the bridge, strong bastions were erected at both ends, of which the one on the Flanders shore was named fort St. Maria, the other on the Brabant side fort St. Philip, in honour of the king.

While active preparations were making in the Spanish camp for the execution of this scheme, and the whole attention of the enemy was directed to it, the duke made an unexpected attack upon Dendermonde, a strong town between Ghent and Antwerp, at the confluence of the Dender and the Scheldt. As long as this important place was in the hands of the enemy, the towns of Ghent and Antwerp could mutually support each other, and by the facility of their communication, frustrate all the efforts of the besiegers. Its capture would leave the prince free to act against both towns, and might decide the fate of his undertaking. The rapidity of his attack left the besieged no time to open their sluices, and lay the country under water. A hot cannonade was opened upon the chief bastion of the town, before the Brussels gate; but was answered by the fire of the besieged, which made great havoc amongst the Spaniards. It increased, however, rather than discouraged their ardour; and the insults of the garrison, who mutilated the statue of a saint before their eyes, and after treating it with the most contumelious indignity, hurled it down from the rampart, raised their fury to the highest pitch. Clamorously they demanded to be led against the bastion, before their fire had made a sufficient breach in it, and the prince, to avail himself of the first ardour of their impetuosity, gave the signal for the assault. After a sanguinary contest of two hours, the rampart was mounted, and those, who were not sacrificed to the first fury of the Spaniards, threw themselves into the town. The latter was, indeed, now more exposed, a fire being directed upon it from the works which had been carried; but its strong walls, and the broad moat which surrounded it, gave reason to expect a protracted resistance. The inventive resources of the Prince of Parma soon overcame this obstacle also. While the bombardment was carried on night and day, the troops were incessantly employed in diverting the course of the Dender, which supplied the foss with water, and the besieged were seized with despair, as they saw the water of the trenches, the last defence of the town, gradually disappear. They hastened to capitulate, and in August, 1584, received a Spanish garrison. Thus, in the short space of eleven days, the Prince of Parma accomplished an undertaking which, in the opinion of competent judges, would require as many weeks.

The town of Ghent, now cut off from Antwerp and the sea, and hard pressed by the troops of the king, which were encamped in its vicinity, and without hope of immediate succour, began to despair, as famine, with all its dreadful train, advanced upon them with rapid steps. The inhabitants therefore despatched deputies to the Spanish camp at Bevern to tender its submission to the king, upon the same terms as the prince had a short time previously offered. The deputies were informed that the time for treaties was past, and that an unconditional submission alone could appease the just anger of the monarch whom they had offended by their rebellion. Nay, they were even given to understand, that it would be only through his great mercy if the same humiliation were not exacted from them, as their rebellious ancestors were forced to undergo under Charles V., namely, to implore pardon half naked, and with a cord round their necks. The deputies returned to Ghent in despair, but three days afterwards a new deputation was sent to the Spanish camp, which at last, by the intercession of one of the prince's friends, who was a prisoner in Ghent, obtained peace upon moderate terms. The town was to pay a fine of 200,000 florins, recall the banished Papists, and expel its Protestant inhabitants, who, however, were to be allowed two years for the settlement of their affairs. All the inhabitants, except six, who were reserved for capital punishment, (but afterwards pardoned,) were included in a general amnesty, and the garrison, which amounted to 2,000 men, were allowed to evacuate the place with the honours of war. This treaty was concluded in September of the same year, at the head quarters at Bevern, and immediately 3,000 Spaniards marched into the town as a garrison.

It was more by the terror of his name, and the dread of famine, than by the force of arms, that the Prince of Parma had succeeded in reducing this city to submission, the largest and strongest in the Netherlands, which was little inferior to Paris within the barriers of its inner town, consisted of 37,000 houses, and was built on twenty islands, connected by ninety-eight stone bridges. The important privileges which, in the course of several centuries, this city had contrived to extort from its rulers, fostered in its inhabitants a spirit of independence, which not unfrequently degenerated into riot and licence, and naturally brought it in collision with the Austrian-Spanish government. And it was exactly this bold spirit of liberty, which procured for the reformation the rapid and extensive success it met with in this town, and the combined incentives of civil and religious freedom produced all those scenes of violence, by which, during the rebellion, it had unfortunately distinguished itself. Besides the fine levied, the prince found within the walls a large store of artillery, carriages, ships, and building materials of all kinds, with numerous workmen and sailors, who materially aided him in his plans against Antwerp.

Before Ghent surrendered to the king, Vilvorden and Herentals had fallen into the hands of the Spaniards, and the capture of the block-houses near the village of Willebrock had cut off Antwerp from Brussels and Malines. The loss of these places, within so short a period, deprived Antwerp of all hope of succour from Brabant and Flanders, and limited all their expectations to the assistance which might be looked for from Zealand But to deprive them also of this the Prince of Parma was now making the most energetic preparations

The citizens of Antwerp had beheld the first operations of the enemy against their town with the proud security with which the sight of their invincible river inspired them. This confidence was also in a degree justified by the opinion of the Prince of Orange, who, upon the first intelligence of the design, had said, that the Spanish army would inevitably perish before the walls of Antwerp. That nothing, however, might be neglected, he sent, a short time before his assassination, for the Burgomaster of Antwerp, Philip Marnix of St. Aldegonde, his intimate friend, to Delft, where he consulted with him as to the means of maintaining defensive operations. It was agreed between them that it would be advisable to demolish forthwith the great dam between Sanvliet and Lillo, called the Blaaugarendyk, so as to allow the waters of the East Scheldt to inundate, if necessary, the lowlands of Bergen, and thus, in the event of the Scheldt being closed, to open a passage for the Zealand vessels to the town across the inundated country. Aldegonde had, after his return, actually persuaded the magistrate and the majority of the citizens to agree to this proposal, when it was resisted by the guild of butchers, who complained that they would be ruined by such a measure; for the plain, which it was wished to lay under water, was a vast tract of pasture land, upon which about 12,000 oxen were annually put to graze. The objection of the butchers was successful, and they managed to prevent the execution of this salutary scheme, until the enemy had got possession of the dams as well as the pasture land.

At the suggestion of the burgomaster, St. Aldegonde, who, himself a member of the states of Brabant, was possessed of great authority in that council, the fortifications on both sides the Scheldt had, a short time before the arrival of the Spaniards, been placed in repair, and many new redoubts erected round the town. The dams had been cut through at Saftingen, and the water of the West Scheldt let out over nearly the whole country of Waes. In the adjacent Marquisate of Bergen, troops had been enlisted by the Count of Hohenlohe, and a Scotch regiment, under the command of Colonel Morgan, was already in the pay of the republic, while fresh reinforcements were daily expected from England and France. Above all, the states of Holland and Zealand were called upon to hasten their supplies. But after the enemy had taken strong positions on both sides of the river, and the fire of their batteries made the navigation dangerous, when place after place in Brabant fell into their hands, and their cavalry had cut off all communication on the land side, the inhabitants of Antwerp began at last to enter tain serious apprehensions for the future. The town then contained 85,000 souls, and according to calculation 300,000 quarters of corn were annually required for their support At the beginning of the siege neither the supply nor the money was wanting for the laying in of such a store; for in spite of the enemy's fire, the Zealand victualling ships, taking advantage of the rising tide, contrived to make their way to the town. All that was requisite, was to prevent any of the richer citizens from buying up these supplies, and, in case of scarcity, raising the price. To secure his object, one Gianibelli, from Mantua, who had rendered important services in the course of the siege, proposed a property tax of one penny in every hundred, and the appointment of a board of respectable persons to purchase corn with this money, and distribute it weekly. And until the returns of this tax should be available, the richer classes should advance the required sum, holding the corn purchased, as a deposit, in their own magazines; and were also to share in the profit. But this plan was unwelcome to the wealthier citizens, who had resolved to profit by the general distress. They recommended that every individual should be required to provide himself with a sufficient supply for two years; a proposition which, however it might suit their own circumstances, was very unreasonable in regard to the poorer inhabitants, who, even before the siege, could scarely find means to supply themselves for so many months. They obtained, indeed, their object, which was to reduce the poor to the necessity of either quitting the place, or becoming entirely their dependents. But when they afterwards reflected, that in the time of need the rights of property would not be respected, they found it advisable not to be over hasty in making their own purchases.

The magistrate, in order to avert an evil that would have pressed upon individuals only, had recourse to an expedient which endangered the safety of all. Some enterprising persons in Zealand had freighted a large fleet with provisions, which succeeded in passing the guns of the enemy, and discharged its cargo at Antwerp. The hope of a large profit had tempted the merchants to enter upon this hazardous speculation; in this, however, they were disappointed, as the magistrate of Antwerp had, just before their arrival, issued an edict, regulating the price of all the necessaries of life. At the same time, to prevent individuals from buying up the whole cargo, and storing it in their magazines, with a view of disposing of it afterwards at a dearer rate, he ordered that the whole should be publicly sold in any quantities from the vessels. The speculators, cheated of their hopes of profit by these precautions, set sail again, and left Antwerp with the greater part of their cargo, which would have sufficed for the support of the town for several months.

This neglect of the most essential and natural means of preservation can only be explained by the supposition, that the inhabitants considered it absolutely impossible ever to close the Scheldt completely, and consequently had not the least apprehension that things would come to extremity. When the intelligence arrived in Antwerp that the prince intended to throw a bridge over the Scheldt, the idea was universally ridiculed as chimerical. An arrogant comparison was drawn between the republic and the stream, and it was said, that the one would bear the Spanish yoke as little as the other. "A river which is 2400 feet broad, and, with its own waters alone, above sixty feet deep, but which with the tide rose twelve feet more—would such a stream," it was asked, "submit to be spanned by a miserable piece of paling? Where were beams to be found, high enough to reach to the bottom and project above the surface? and how was a work of this kind to stand in winter, when whole islands and mountains of ice, which stone walls could hardly resist, would be driven by the flood against its weak timbers, and splinter them to pieces like glass? Or, perhaps, the prince purposed to construct a bridge of boats; if so, where would he procure the latter, and how bring them into his entrenchments? They must necessarily be brought past Antwerp, where a fleet was ready to capture or sink them."

But while they were trying to prove the absurdity of the Prince of Parma's undertaking, he had already completed it. As soon as the forts St. Maria and St. Philip were erected, and protected the workmen and the work by their fire, a pier was built out into the stream from both banks, for which purpose the masts of the largest vessels were employed; by a skilful arrangement of the timbers, they contrived to give the whole such solidity, that, as the result proved, it was able to resist the violent pressure of the ice These timbers, which rested firmly and securely on the bottom of the river, and projected a considerable height above it, being covered with planks, afforded a commodious roadway. It was wide enough to allow eight men to cross abreast, and a balustrade that ran along it on both sides, protected them from the fire of small arms from the enemy's vessels. This "Stacade," as it was called, ran from the two opposite shores as far as the increasing depth and force of the stream allowed. It reduced the breadth of the river to about 1100 feet; as, however, the middle and proper current would not admit of such a barrier, there remained, therefore, between the two stacades, a space of more than six hundred paces, through which a whole fleet of transports could sail with ease. This intervening space, the prince designed to close by a bridge of boats, for which purpose the craft must be procured from Dunkirk. But besides that they could not be obtained in any number at that place, it would be difficult to bring them past Antwerp without great loss. He was, therefore, obliged to content himself for the time with having narrowed the stream one half, and rendered the passage of the enemy's vessels so much the more difficult. Where the stacades terminated in the middle of the stream, they spread out into parallelograms, which were mounted with heavy guns, and served as a kind of battery on the water. From these, a heavy fire was opened on every vessel that attempted to pass through this narrow channel. Whole fleets, however, and single vessels still attempted and succeeded in passing this dangerous strait.

Meanwhile Ghent surrendered, and this unexpected success at once rescued the prince from his dilemma. He found in this town every thing necessary to complete his bridge of boats; and the only difficulty now was its safe transport, which was furnished by the enemy themselves. By cutting the dams at Saftingen, a great part of the country of Waes, as far as the village of Borcht, had been laid under water, so that it was not difficult to cross it with flat-bottomed boats. The prince, therefore, ordered his vessels to run out from Ghent, and after passing Dendermonde and Rupelmonde, to pass through the left dyke of the Scheldt, leaving Antwerp to the right, and sail over the inundated fields in the direction of Borcht. To protect this passage, a fort was erected at the latter village, which would keep the enemy in check. All succeeded to his wishes, though not without a sharp action with the enemy's flotilla, which was sent out to intercept this convoy. After breaking through a few more dams on their route, they reached the Spanish quarters at Calloo, and successfully entered the Scheldt again. The exultation of the army was the greater, when they discovered the extent of danger the vessels had so narrowly escaped. Scarcely had they got quit of the enemy's vessels, when a strong reinforcement from Antwerp got under weigh, commanded by the valiant defender of Lillo, Odets von Teligny. When this officer saw that the affair was over, and that the enemy had escaped, he took possession of the dam through which their fleet had passed, and threw up a fort on the spot, in order to stop the passage of any vessels from Ghent, which might attempt to follow them.

By this step, the prince was again thrown into embarrassment. He was far from having, as yet, a sufficient number of vessels, either for the construction of the bridge, or for its defence, and the passage by which the former convoy had arrived, was now closed by the fort erected by Teligny While he was reconnoitring the country to discover a new way for his fleets, an idea occurred to him, which not only put an end to his present dilemma, but greatly accelerated the success of his whole plan. Not far from the village of Stecken, in Waes, which is within some 5000 paces of the commencement of the inundation, flows a small stream called the Moer, which falls into the Scheldt near Ghent. From this river, he caused a canal to be dug to the spot where the inundations began, and as the water of these was not everywhere deep enough for the transit of his boats, the canal between Bevern and Verrebroek was continued to Calloo, where it was met by the Scheldt. At this work five hundred pioneers laboured without intermission, and in order to cheer the toil of the soldiers, the prince himself took part in it. In this way did he imitate the example of two celebrated Romans, Drusus and Corbulo, who, by similar works, had united the Rhine with the Zuyder Zee, and the Maes with the Rhine.

This canal, which the army in honour of its projector called the canal of Parma, was 14,000 paces in length, and was of proportionable depth and breadth, so as to be navigable for ships of a considerable burden. It afforded to the vessels from Ghent not only a more secure, but also a much shorter course to the Spanish quarters, because it was no longer necessary to follow the many windings of the Scheldt, but entering the Moer at once near Ghent, and from thence passing close to Stecken, they could proceed through the canal, and across the inundated country as far as Calloo. As the produce of all Flanders was brought to the town of Ghent, this canal placed the Spanish camp in communication with the whole province. Abundance poured into the camp from all quarters, so that during the whole course of the siege the Spaniards suffered no scarcity of any kind. But the greatest benefit which the prince derived from this work, was an adequate supply of flat-bottomed vessels to complete his bridge.

These preparations were overtaken by the arrival of winter, which, as the Scheldt was filled with drift ice, occasioned a considerable delay in the building of the bridge. The prince had contemplated with anxiety the approach of this season, lest it should prove highly destructive to the work he had undertaken, and afford the enemy a favourable opportunity for making a serious attack upon it. But the skill of his engineers saved him from the one danger, and the strange inaction of the enemy freed him from the other. It frequently happened, indeed, that at flood time large pieces of ice were entangled in the timbers, and shook them violently, but they stood the assault of the furious element, which only served to prove their stability.

In Antwerp meanwhile, important moments had been wasted in futile deliberations, and in a struggle of factions, the general welfare was neglected. The government of the town was divided among too many heads, and much too great a share in it was held by the riotous mob, to allow room for calmness of deliberation, or firmness of action. Besides the municipal magistracy itself, in which the burgomaster had only a single voice, there were in the city a number of guilds to whom were consigned the charge of the internal and external defence, the provisioning of the town, its fortifications the marine, commerce, &c.; some of whom must be consulted in every business of importance. By means of this crowd of speakers, who intruded at pleasure into the council, and ma naged to carry, by clamour and the number of their adherents, what they could not effect by their arguments, the people obtained a dangerous influence in the public debates, and the natural struggle of such discordant interests retarded the execution of every salutary measure. A government, so vacillating and impotent, could not comand the respect of unruly sailors and a lawless soldiery. The orders of the state consequently were but imperfectly obeyed, and the decisive moment was more than once lost by the negligence, not to say the open mutiny, both of the land and sea forces.

The little harmony in the selection of the means by which the enemy was to be opposed, would not, however, have proved so injurious, had there but existed unanimity as to the end But on this very point the wealthy citizens and poorer classes were divided, for the former, having every thing to apprehend from allowing matters to be carried to extremity, were strongly inclined to treat with the Prince of Parma. This disposition they did not even attempt to conceal, after the fort of Liefkenshoek had fallen into the enemy's hands, and serious fears were entertained for the navigation of the Scheldt. Some of them, indeed, withdrew entirely from the danger, and left to its fate the town whose prosperity they had been ready enough to share, but in whose adversity they were unwilling to bear a part. From sixty to seventy of those who remained memorialized the council, advising that terms should be made with the king. No sooner, however, had the populace got intelligence of it, than their indignation broke out in a violent uproar, which was with difficulty appeased by the imprisonment and fining of the petitioners. Tranquillity could only be fully restored by the publication of an edict, which imposed the penalty of death on all who either publicly or privately should countenance proposals for peace.

The Prince of Parma did not fail to take advantage of these disturbances: for nothing that transpired within the city escaped his notice, being well served by the agents with whom he maintained a secret understanding with Antwerp, as well as the other towns of Brabant and Flanders. Although he had already made considerable progress in his measures for distressing the town, still he had many steps to take before he could actually make himself master of it; and one unlucky moment might destroy the work of many months Without, therefore, neglecting any of his warlike preparations he determined to make one more serious attempt to get possession by fair means. With this object, he despatched a letter in November to the great Council of Antwerp, in which he skilfully made use of every topic likely to induce the citizens to come to terms, or at least to increase their existing dissensions. He treated them in this letter in the light of persons who had been led astray, and threw the whole blame of their revolt and refractory conduct hitherto upon the intriguing spirit of the Prince of Orange, from whose artifices the retributive justice of Heaven had so lately liberated them. "It was," he said, "now in their power to awake from their long infatuation, and return to their allegiance to a monarch, who was ready and anxious to be reconciled to his subjects. For this end, he gladly offered himself as mediator, as he had never ceased to love a country in which he had been born, and where he had spent the happiest days of his youth. He therefore exhorted them to send plenipotentiaries with whom he could arrange the conditions of peace, and gave them hopes of obtaining reasonable terms if they made a timely submission, but also threatened them with the severest treatment if they pushed matters to extremity."

This letter, in which we are glad to recognise a language very different from that which the Duke of Alva held ten years before on a similar occasion. was answered by the townspeople in a respectful and dignified tone. While they did full justice to the personal character of the prince, and acknowledged his favourable intentions towards them with gratitude, they lamented the hardness of the times, which placed it out of his power to treat them in accordance with his character and disposition. They declared that they would gladly place their fate in his hands, if he were absolute master of his actions, instead of being obliged to obey the will of another, whose proceedings his own candour would not allow him to approve of. The unalterable resolution of the King of Spain, as well as the vow which he had made to the Pope, were only too well known for them to have any hopes in that quarter. They at the same time defended with a noble warmth the memory of the Prince of Orange, their benefactor and preserver, while they enumerated the true causes which had produced this unhappy war, and had caused the provinces to revolt from the Spanish crown. At the same time, they did not disguise from him that they had hopes of finding a new and a milder master in the King of France, and that, if only for this reason, they could not enter into any treaty with the Spanish king, without incurring the charge of the most culpable fickleness and ingratitude.

The united provinces, in fact, dispirited by a succession of reverses, had at last come to the determination of placing themselves under the protection and sovereignty of France, and of preserving their existence and their ancient privileges by the sacrifice of their independence. With this view, an embassy had some time before been despatched to Paris, and it was the prospect of this powerful assistance which principally supported the courage of the people of Antwerp Henry III., King of France, was personally disposed to accept this offer; but the troubles which the intrigues of the Spaniards contrived to excite within his own kingdom, compelled him against his will to abandon it. The provinces now turned for assistance to Queen Elizabeth of England, who sent them some supplies, which, however, came too late to save Antwerp. While the people of this city were awaiting the issue of these negociations, and expecting aid from foreign powers, they neglected, unfortunately, the most natural and immediate means of defence; the whole winter was lost, and while the enemy turned it to greater advantage, the more complete was their indecision and inactivity.

The burgomaster of Antwerp, St. Aldegonde, had, indeed, repeatedly urged the fleet of Zealand to attack the enemy's works, which should be supported on the other side from Antwerp. The long and frequently stormy nights would favour this attempt, and if at the same time a sally were made by the garrison at Lillo, it seemed scarcely possible for the enemy to resist this triple assault. But unfortunately misunderstandings had arisen between the commander of the fleet, William von Blois von Treslong, and the Admiralty of Zealand, which caused the equipment of the fleet to be most unaccountably delayed. In order to quicken their movements, Teligny at last resolved to go himself to Middelburg, where the states of Zealand were assembled; but as the enemy were in possession of all the roads, the attempt cost him his freedom, and the republic its most valiant defender. However, there was no want of enterprising vessels which, under the favour of the night and the flood tide. passing through the still open bridge, in spite of the enemy's fire, threw provisions into the town, and returned with the ebb. But as many of these vessels fell into the hands of the enemy, the council gave orders that they should never risk the passage, unless they amounted to a certain number; and the result unfortunately was, that none attempted it, because the required number could not be collected at one time. Several attacks were also made from Antwerp on the ships of the Spaniards, which were not entirely unsuccessful; some of the latter were captured, others sunk, and all that was required was to execute similar attempts on a grand scale. But however zealously St. Aldegonde urged this, still not a captain was to be found who would command a vessel for that purpose.

Amid these delays the winter expired, and scarcely had the ice begun to disappear, when the construction of the bridge of boats was actively resumed by the besiegers Between the two piers, a space of more than 600 paces still remained to be filled up, which was effected in the following manner. Thirty-two flat-bottomed vessels, each sixty-six feet long and twenty broad, were fastened together with strong cables and iron chains, but at a distance from each other of about twenty feet, to allow a free passage to the stream. Each boat, moreover, was moored with two cables, both up and down the stream, but which, as the water rose with the tide, or sunk with the ebb, could be slackened or tightened. Upon the boats great masts were laid, which reached from one to another, and being covered with planks, formed a regular road, which, like that along the piers, was protected with a balustrade. This bridge of boats, of which the two piers formed a continuation, had, including the latter, a length of 24,000 paces. This formidable work was so ingeniously constructed, and so richly furnished with the instruments of destruction, that it seemed almost capable, like a living creature, of defending itself at the word of command, scattering death among all who approached. Besides the two forts of St. Maria and St. Philip, which terminated the bridge on either shore, and the two wooden bastions on the bridge itself, which were filled with soldiers and mounted with guns on all sides, each of the two-and-thirty vessels was manned with thirty soldiers and four sailors, and showed the cannon's mouth to the enemy, whether he came up from Zealand or down from Antwerp. There were in all ninety-seven cannon, which were distributed beneath and above the bridge, and more than 1500 men who were posted partly in the forts, partly in the vessels, and in case of necessity, could maintain a terrible fire of small arms upon the enemy.

But with all this, the prince did not consider his work sufficiently secure. It was to be expected that the enemy would leave nothing unattempted to burst, by the force of his machines, the middle and weakest part. To guard against this, he erected in a line with the bridge of boats, but at some distance from it, another distinct defence, intended to break the force of any attack that might be directed against the bridge itself. This work consisted of thirty-three vessels of considerable magnitude, which were moored in a row athwart the stream, and fastened in threes by masts, so that they formed eleven different groups. Each of these, like a file of pikemen, presented fourteen long wooden poles, with iron heads to the approaching enemy. These vessels were loaded merely with ballast, and were anchored each by a double but slack cable, so as to be able to give to the rise and fall of the tide. As they were in constant motion, they got from the soldiers the name of "swimmers." The whole bridge of boats, and also a part of the piers was covered by these swimmers, which were stationed above as well as below the bridge. To all these defensive preparations, was added a fleet of forty men of war, which were stationed on both coasts, and served as a protection to the whole.

This astonishing work was finished in March, 1585, the seventh month of the siege, and the day on which it was completed was kept as a jubilee by the troops. The great event was announced to the besieged by a grand feu de joie, and the army, as if to enjoy ocular demonstration of its triumph, extended itself along the whole platform to gaze upon the proud stream, peacefully and obediently flowing under the yoke, which had been imposed upon it. All the toil they had undergone was forgotten in this delightful spectacle, and every man, who had had a hand in it, however insignificant he might be, assumed to himself a portion of the honour, which the successful execution of so gigantic an enterprise conferred on its illustrious projector. On the other hand, nothing could equal the consternation which seized the citizens of Antwerp, when intelligence was brought them, that the Scheldt was now actually closed, and all access from Zealand cut off. To increase their dismay, they learned the fall of Brussels also, which had at last been compelled by famine to capitulate. An attempt, made by the Count of Hohenlohe about the same time, on Herzogenbusch, with a view to recapture the town, or at least form a diversion, was equally unsuccessful; and thus the unfortunate city lost all hope of assistance, both by sea and land.

These evil tidings were brought them by some fugitives, who had succeeded in passing the Spanish videttes, and had made their way into the town; and a spy, whom the Burgomaster had sent out to reconnoitre the enemy's works, increased the general alarm by his report. He had been seized and carried before the Prince of Parma, who commanded him to be conducted over all the works, and all the defences of the bridge to be pointed out to him. After this had been done, he was again brought before the general, who dismissed him with these words. "Go," said he, "and report what you have seen, to those who sent you. And tell them too, that it is my firm resolve to bury myself under the ruins of this bridge, or by means of it to pass into your town."

But the certainty of danger now at last awakened the zeal of the confederates, and it was no fault of theirs, if the former half of the prince's vow was not fulfilled. The latter had long viewed with apprehension the preparations, which were making in Zealand for the relief of the town. He saw clearly that it was from this quarter, that he had to fear the most dangerous blow, and that with all his works, he could not make head against the combined fleets of Zealand and Antwerp, if they were to fall upon him at the same time, and at the proper moment. For a while, the delays of the Admiral of Zealand, which he had laboured by all the means in his power to prolong, had been his security; but now the urgent necessity accelerated the expedition, and without waiting for the admiral, the states at Middleburg despatched the Count Justin of Nassau, with as many ships as they could muster, to the as sistance of the besieged. This fleet took up a position before Liefkenshoek, which was in possession of the Spaniards, and supported by a few vessels from the opposite fort of Lillo, cannonaded it with such success, that the walls were in a short time demolished, and the place carried by storm The Walloons, who formed the garrison, did not display the firmness which might have been expected from soldiers of the Duke of Parma; they shamefully surrendered the fort to the enemy, who in a short time were in possession of the whole Island of Doel, with all the redoubts situated upon it The loss of these places, which were, however, soon retaken, incensed the Duke of Parma so much, that he tried the officers by court-martial, and caused the most culpable among them to be beheaded. Meanwhile, this important conquest opened to the Zealanders a free passage as far as the bridge; and after concerting with the people of Antwerp, the time was fixed for a combined attack on this work. It was arranged that, while the bridge of boats was blown up by machines already prepared in Antwerp, the Zealand fleet with a sufficient supply of provisions should be in the vicinity, ready to sail to the town through the opening.

While the Duke of Parma was engaged in constructing his bridge, an engineer, within the walls, was already preparing the materials for its destruction. Frederick Gianibelli, was the name of the man whom fate had destined to be the Archimedes of Antwerp, and to exhaust in its defence, the same ingenuity with the same want of success. He was born in Mantua, and had formerly visited Madrid, for the purpose, it was said, of offering his services to King Philip in the Belgian war. But wearied with waiting, the offended engineer left the court, with the intention of making the King of Spain sensibly feel the value of talents, which he had so little known how to appreciate. He next sought the service of Queen Elizabeth of England, the declared enemy of Spain, who, after witnessing a few specimens of his skill, sent him to Antwerp. He took up his residence in that town, and, in the present extremity, devoted to its defence, his knowledge, his energy, and his zeal.

As soon as this artist perceived that the project of erecting the bridge was seriously intended, and that the work was fast approaching to completion, he applied to the magistracy for three large vessels, from a hundred and fifty to five hundred tons, in which he proposed to place mines. He also demanded sixty boats, which, fastened together with cables and chains, furnished with projecting grappling irons, and put in motion with the ebbing of the tide, were intended to second the operation of the mine-ships, by being directed in a wedgelike form against the bridge. But he had to deal with men who were quite incapable of comprehending an idea out of the common way, and even where the salvation of their country was at stake, could not forget the calculating habits of trade.

His scheme was rejected as too expensive, and with difficulty he at last obtained the grant of two smaller vessels, from seventy to eighty tons, with a number of flat-bottomed boats. With these two vessels, one of which he called the "Fortune," and the other the "Hope," he proceeded in the following manner. In the hold of each, he built a hollow chamber of freestone, five feet broad, three and a half high, and forty long. This magazine he filled with sixty hundredweight of the finest priming powder, of his own compounding, and covered it with as heavy a weight of large slabs and millstones, as the vessels could carry. Over these he further added a roof of similar stones, which ran up to a point, and projected six feet above the ship's side. The deck itself was crammed with iron chains and hooks, knives, nails, and other destructive missiles; the remaining space, which was not occupied by the magazine, was likewise filled up with planks. Several small apertures were left in the chamber for the matches, which were to set fire to the mine For greater certainty, he had also contrived a piece of mechanism, which, after the lapse of a given time, would strike out sparks, and even if the matches failed, would set the ship on fire. To delude the enemy into a belief, that these machines were only intended to set the bridge on fire, a composition of brimstone and pitch was placed in the top, which could burn a whole hour. And still further to divert the enemy's attention from the proper seat of danger, he also prepared thirty-two small flat bottomed boats, upon which there were only fireworks burning, and whose sole object was to deceive the enemy. These fire ships were to be sent down upon the bridge, in four separate squadrons, at intervals of half an hour, and keep the enemy incessantly engaged for two whole hours, so that, tired of firing, and wearied by vain expectation, they might at last relax their vigilance, before the real fireships came. In addition to all this, he also despatched a few vessels in which powder was concealed, in order to blow up the floating work before the bridge, and to clear a passage for the two principal ships At the same time, he hoped by this preliminary attack to engage the enemy's attention, to draw them out, and expose them to the full deadly effect of the volcano.

The night between the 4th and 5th of April was fixed for the execution of this great undertaking. An obscure rumour of it had already diffused itself through the Spanish camp, and particularly from the circumstance of many divers from Antwerp having been detected, endeavouring to cut the cables of the vessels. They were prepared, therefore, for a serious attack; they only mistook the real nature of it, and counted on having to fight rather with man than the elements In this expectation, the duke caused the guards along the whole bank to be doubled, and drew up the chief part of his troops in the vicinity of the bridge, where he was present in person; thus meeting the danger while endeavouring to avoid it. No sooner was it dark, then three burning vessels were seen to float down from the city towards the bridge, then three more, and directly after the same number. They beat to arms throughout the Spanish camp, and the whole length of the bridge was crowded with soldiers. Meantime, the number of the fireships increased, and they came in regular order down the stream, sometimes two, and sometimes three abreast, being at first steered by sailors on board them. The Admiral of the Antwerp fleet, Jacob Jacobson, (whether designedly, or through carelessness, was not known,) had committed the error of sending off the four squadrons of fireships too quickly one after another, and caused the two large mine-ships also to follow them too soon, and thus disturbed the intended order of attack.

The array of vessels kept approaching, and the darkness of night still further heightened the extraordinary spectacle. As far as the eye could follow the course of the stream, all was fire; the fireships burning as brilliantly as if they were themselves in the flames; the surface of the water glittered with light; the dykes and the batteries along the shore, the flags, arms, and accoutrements of the soldiers, who lined the rivers as well as the bridge, were clearly distinguishable in the glare. With a mingled sensation of awe and pleasure, the soldiers watched the unusual sight, which rather resembled a fête than a hostile preparation, but from the very strangeness of the contrast filled the mind with a mysterious awe. When the burning fleet had come within 2,000 paces of the bridge, those who had the charge of it lighted the matches, impelled the two mine-vessels into the middle of the stream, and leaving the others to the guidance of the current of the waves, they hastily made their escape in boats, which had been kept in readiness.

Their course, however, was irregular, and, destitute of steersmen, they arrived singly and separately at the floating works, where they either continued hanging, or were dashed off sidewise on the shore. The foremost powder-ships, which were intended to set fire to the floating works, were cast by the force of a squall, which arose at that instant, on the Flemish coast; one of the two, the "Fortune," grounded in its passage, before it reached the bridge, and killed by its explosion some Spanish soldiers, who were at work in a neighbouring battery. The other and larger fireship, called the "Hope," narrowly escaped a similar fate. The current drove her against the floating defences towards the Flemish bank, where it remained hanging; and had it taken fire at that moment the greatest part of its effect would have been lost. Deceived by the flames, which this machine, like the other vessels, emitted, the Spaniards took it for a common fireship, intended to burn the bridge of boats. And as they had seen them extinguished one after the other without further effect, all fears were dispelled, and the Spaniards began to ridicule the preparations of the enemy, which had been ushered in with so much display, and now had so absurd an end. Some of the boldest threw themselves into the stream, in order to get a close view of the fireship, and extinguish it, when, by its weight, it suddenly broke through, burst the floating work which had detained it, and drove with terrible force on the bridge of boats. All was now in commotion on the bridge, and the prince called to the sailors to keep the vessel off with poles, and to extinguish the flames before they caught the timbers.

At this critical moment he was standing at the farthest end of the left pier, where it formed a bastion in the water, and joined the bridge of boats. By his side stood the Margrave of Rysburg, general of cavalry, and governor of the province of Artois, who had formerly served the states, but from a protector of the republic had become its worst enemy; the Baron of Billy, Governor of Friesland, and commander of the German regiments; the Generals Cajetan and Guasto, with several of the principal officers; all forgetful of their own danger, and entirely occupied with averting the general calamity. At this moment, a Spanish ensign approached the Prince of Parma, and conjured him to remove from a place, where his life was in manifest and imminent peril. No attention being paid to his entreaty, he repeated it still more urgently, and at last fell at his feet, and implored him in this one instance to take advice from his servant. While he said this, he had laid hold of the duke's coat, as though he wished forcibly to draw him away from the spot, and the latter, surprised rather at the man's boldness, than persuaded by his arguments, retired at last to the shore attended by Cajetan and Guasto. He had scarcely time to reach the fort St. Maria, at the end of the bridge, when an explosion took place behind him, just as if the earth had burst, or the vault of heaven given way. The duke and his whole army fell to the ground as dead, and several minutes elapsed before they recovered their consciousness

But then what a sight presented itself! The waters of the Scheldt had been divided to its lowest depth, and driven with a surge, which rose like a wall above the dam that confined it; so that all the fortifications on the banks were several feet under water. The earth shook for three miles round. Nearly the whole left pier, on which the fireship had been driven, with a part of the bridge of boats, had been burst and shattered to atoms, with all that was upon it; spars, cannon, and men, blown into the air. Even the enormous blocks of stone which had covered the mine, had, by the force of the explosion, been hurled into the neighbouring fields, so that many of them were afterwards dug out of the ground at the distance of a thousand paces from the bridge. Six vessels were buried, several had gone to pieces. But still more terrible was the carnage, which the murderous machine had dealt amongst the soldiers. Five hundred, according to other reports even eight hundred, were sacrificed to its fury, without reckoning those who escaped with mutilated or injured bodies. The most opposite kinds of death were combined in this frightful moment. Some were consumed by the flames of the explosion, others scalded to death by the boiling water of the river, others stifled by the poisonous vapour of the brimstone; some were drowned in the stream, some buried under the hail of falling masses of rock, many cut to pieces by the knives and hooks, or shattered by the balls, which were poured from the bowels of the machine. Some were found lifeless without any visible injury, having in all probability been killed by the mere concussion of the air. The spectacle, which presented itself directly after the firing of the mine, was fearful. Men were seen wedged between the palisades of the bridge, or struggling to free themselves from beneath ponderous masses of rock, or hanging in the rigging of the ships; and from all places and quarters the most heart-rending cries for help arose, but as each was absorbed in his own safety, these could only be answered by helpless wailings.

Many had escaped in the most wonderful manner. An officer, named Tucci, was carried by the whirlwind, like a feather, high into the air, where he was for a moment suspended, and then dropped into the river, where he saved himself by swimming. Another, was taken up by the force of the blast from the Flanders shore, and deposited on that of Brabant, incurring merely a slight contusion on the shoulder; he felt, as he afterwards said, during this rapid aerial transit, just as if he had been fired out of a cannon. The Prince of Parma himself had never been so near death, as at that moment, when half a minute saved his life. He had scarcely set foot in the fort of St. Maria, when he was lifted off his feet, as if by a hurricane; and a beam, which struck him on the head and shoulders, stretched him senseless on the earth. For a long time he was believed to be actually killed, many remembering to have seen him on the bridge only a few minutes before the fatal explosion. He was found at last between his attendants, Cajetan and Guasto, raising himself up with his hand on his sword; and the intelligence stirred the spirits of the whole army. But vain would be the attempt to depict his feelings, when he surveyed the devastation, which a single moment had caused in the work of so many months. The bridge of boats, upon which all his hopes rested, was rent asunder; a great part of his army was destroyed; another portion maimed and rendered ineffective for many days; many of his best officers were killed; and as if the present calamity were not sufficient, he had now to learn the painful intelligence that the Margrave of Rysburg, whom of all his officers he prized the highest, was missing. And yet the worst was still to come, for every moment the fleets of the enemy were to be expected from Antwerp and Lillo, to which this fearful position of the army would disable him from offering any effectual resistance. The bridge was entirely destroyed, and nothing could prevent the fleet from Zealand passing through in full sail; while the confusion of the troops in this first moment was so great and general, that it would have been impossible to give or obey orders, as many corps had lost their commanding officers, and many commanders their corps; and even the places where they had been stationed were no longer to be recognised amid the general ruin. Add to this, that all the batteries on shore were under water, that several cannon were sunk, that the matches were wet, and the ammunition damaged. What a moment for the enemy, if they had known how to avail themselves of it!

It will scarcely be believed, however, that this success, which surpassed all expectation, was lost to Antwerp, simply because nothing was known of it. St. Aldegonde, indeed, as soon as the explosion of the mine was heard in the town, had sent out several galleys in the direction of the bridge, with orders to send up fireballs and rockets the moment they had passed it, and then to sail with the intelligence straight on to Lillo, in order to bring up, without delay, the Zealand fleet, which had orders to co-operate. At the same time, the Admiral of Antwerp was ordered, as soon as the signal was given, to sail out with his vessels, and attack the enemy in their first consternation. But although a considerable reward was promised to the boatmen sent to reconnoitre, they did not venture near the enemy, but returned without effecting their purpose, and reported that the bridge of boats was uninjured, and the fire-ship had had no effect.

Even on the following day, also, no better measures were taken to learn the true state of the bridge; and as the fleet at Lillo, in spite of the favourable wind, was seen to remain inactive, the belief that the fire-ships had accomplished nothing was confirmed. It did not seem to occur to any one, that this very inactivity of the confederates, which misled the people of Antwerp, might also keep back the Zealanders at Lillo, as in fact it did. So signal an instance of neglect could only have occurred in a government, which, without dignity or independence, was guided by the tumultuous multitude it ought to have governed. The more supine, however, they were themselves in opposing the enemy, the more violently did their rage boil against Gianibelli, whom the frantic mob would have torn in pieces, if they could have caught him. For two days the engineer was in the most imminent danger, until at last, on the third morning, a courier from Lillo, who had swum under the bridge, brought authentic intelligence of its having been destroyed, but at the same time announced that it had been repaired.

This rapid restoration of the bridge was really a miraculous effort of the Prince of Parma. Scarcely had he recovered from the shock, which seemed to have overthrown all his plans, when he contrived, with wonderful presence of mind, to prevent all its evil consequences. The absence of the enemy's fleet, at this decisive moment, revived his hopes. The ruinous state of the bridge appeared to be a secret to them, and though it was impossible to repair, in a few hours, the work of so many months, yet a great point would be gained if it could be done even in appearance. All his men were immediately set to work to remove the ruins, to raise the timbers which had been thrown down, to replace those which were demolished, and to fill up the chasms with ships. The duke himself did not refuse to share in the toil, and his example was followed by all his officers. Stimulated by this popular behaviour, the common soldiers exerted themselves to the utmost; the work was carried on during the whole night under the constant sounding of drums and trumpets, which were distributed along the bridge to drown the noise of the work-people. With dawn of day, few traces remained of the night's havoc; and although the bridge was restored only in appearance, it nevertheless deceived the spy.

and consequently no attack was made upon it. In the mean time, the prince contrived to make the repairs solid, nay, even to introduce some essential alterations in the structure In order to guard against similar accidents for the future, a part of the bridge of boats was made moveable, so that, in case of necessity, it could be taken away, and a passage opened to the fire-ships. His loss of men was supplied from the garrisons of the adjoining places, and by a German regiment which arrived very opportunely from Gueldres. He filled up the vacancies of the officers who were killed, and in doing this, he did not forget the Spanish ensign who had saved his life.

The people of Antwerp, after learning the success of their mine-ship, now did homage to the inventor with as much extravagance, as they had a short time before mistrusted him, and they encouraged his genius to new attempts Gianibelli now actually obtained the number of flat-bottomed vessels which he had at first demanded in vain, and these he equipped in such a manner, that they struck with irresistible force on the bridge, and a second time also burst and separated it. But this time, the wind was contrary to the Zealand fleet, so that they could not put out, and thus the prince obtained once more the necessary respite to repair the damage. The Archimedes of Antwerp was not deterred by any of these disappointments. Anew he fitted out two large vessels, which were armed with iron hooks and similar instruments, in order to tear asunder the bridge. But when the moment came for these vessels to get under weigh, no one was found ready to embark in them. The engineer was therefore obliged to think of a plan for giving to these machines such a self-impulse, that, without being guided by a steersman, they would keep the middle of the stream, and not, like the former ones, be driven on the bank by the wind. One of his workmen, a German, here hit upon a strange invention, if Strada's description of it is to be credited. He affixed a sail under the vessel, which was to be acted upon by the water, just as an ordinary sail is by the wind, and could thus impel the ship with the whole force of the current. The result proved the correctness of his calculation; for this vessel, with the position of its sails reversed, not only kept the centre of the stream. but also ran against the bridge with such impetuosity that the enemy had not time to open it, and it was actually burst asunder. But all these results were of no service to the town, because the attempts were made at random, and were supported by no adequate force. A new fire-ship, equipped like the former, which had succeeded so well, and which Gianibelli had filled with 4000 lbs. of the finest powder, was not even used; for a new mode of attempting their deliverance had now occurred to the people of Antwerp.

Terrified, by so many futile attempts, from endeavouring to clear a passage for vessels on the river by force, they at last came to the determination of doing without the stream entirely. They remembered the example of the town of Leyden, which, when besieged by the Spaniards ten years before, had saved itself by opportunely inundating the surrounding country, and it was resolved to imitate this example. Between Lillo and Stabroek, in the district of Bergen, a wide and somewhat sloping plain extends as far as Antwerp, being protected by numerous embankments and counter-embankments against the irruptions of the East Scheldt. Nothing more was requisite than to break these dams, when the whole plain would become a sea, navigable by flat-bottomed vessels almost to the very walls of Antwerp. If this attempt should succeed, the Duke of Parma might keep the Scheldt guarded with his bridge of boats as long as he pleased; a new river would be formed, which, in case of necessity, would be equally serviceable for the time. This was the very plan which the Prince of Orange had, at the commencement of the siege, recommended, and in which he had been strenuously, but unsuccessfully, seconded by St. Aldegonde, because some of the citizens could not be persuaded to sacrifice their own fields. In the present emergency they reverted to this last resource, but circumstances in the mean time had greatly changed.

The plain in question is intersected by a broad and high dam, which takes its name from the adjacent Castle of Cowenstein, and extends for three miles from the village of Stabroek, in Bergen, as far as the Scheldt, with the great dam of which it unites near Ordam. Beyond this dam no vessels can proceed, however high the tide, and the sea would be vainly turned into the fields as long as such an embankment remained in the way, which would prevent the Zealand vessels from descending into the plain before Antwerp. The fate of the town would therefore depend upon the demolition of this Cowenstein dam; but, foreseeing this, the Prince of Parma had, immediately on commencing the blockade, taken possession of it, and spared no pains to render it tenable to the last. At the village of Stabroek, Count Mansfeld was encamped with the greatest part of his army, and by means of this very Cowenstein dam kept open the communication with the bridge, the head quarters, and the Spanish magazines at Calloo. Thus the army formed an uninterrupted line from Stabroek in Brabant, as far as Bevern in Flanders, intersected indeed, but not broken, by the Scheldt, and which could not be cut off without a sanguinary conflict. On the dam itself, within proper distances, five different batteries had been erected, the command of which was given to the most valiant officers in the army. Nay, as the Prince of Parma could not doubt that now the whole fury of the war would be turned to this point, he entrusted the defence of the bridge to Count Mansfeld, and resolved to defend this important post himself The war, therefore, now assumed a different aspect, and the theatre of it was entirely changed.

Both above and below Lillo, the Netherlanders had in several places cut through the dam, which follows the Brabant shore of the Scheldt; and where a short time before had been green fields, a new element now presented itself, studded with masts and boats. A Zealand fleet, commanded by Count Hohenlohe, navigated the inundated fields, and made repeated movements against the Cowenstein dam, without, however, attempting a serious attack on it, while another fleet showed itself in the Scheldt, threateneng the two coasts alternately with a landing, and occasionally the bridge of boats with an attack. For several days, this manœuvre was practised on the enemy, who, uncertain of the quarter whence an attack was to be expected, would, it was hoped, be exhausted by continual watching, and by degrees lulled into security by so many false alarms. Antwerp had promised Count Hohenlohe to support the attack on the dam by a flotilla from the town; three beacons on the principal tower were to be the signal that this was on the way. When, therefore, on a dark night, the expected columns of fire really ascended above Antwerp, Count Hohenlohe immediately caused 500 of his troops to scale the dam between two of the enemy's redoubts, who surprised part of the Spanish garrison asleep, and cut down the others, who attempted to defend themselves. In a short time, they had gained a firm footing upon the dam, and were just on the point of disembarking the remainder of their force, 2000 in number, when the Spaniards in the adjoining redoubts marched out, and favoured by the narrowness of the ground, made a desperate attack on the crowded Zealanders The guns from the neighbouring batteries opened upon the approaching fleet, and thus rendered the landing of the remaining troops impossible; and as there were no signs of co-operation on the part of the city, the Zealanders were overpowered after a short conflict, and again driven down from the dam. The victorious Spaniards pursued them through the water as far as their boats, sunk many of the latter, and compelled the rest to retreat with heavy loss. Count Hohenlohe threw the blame of this defeat upon the inhabitants of Antwerp, who had deceived him by a false signal, and it certainly must be attributed to the bad arrangement of both parties, that the attempt failed of better success.

But at last the allies determined to make a systematic assault on the enemy with their combined force, and to put an end to the siege by a grand attack, as well on the dam as on the bridge. The 16th of May, 1585, was fixed upon for the execution of this design, and both armies used their utmost endeavours to make this day decisive. The force of the Hollanders and Zealanders, united to that of Antwerp, exceeded 200 ships, to man which they had stripped their towns and citadels, and with this force they purposed to attack the Cowenstein dam on both sides. The bridge over the Scheldt was to be assailed with new machines of Gianibelli's invention, and the Duke of Parma thereby hindered from assisting the defence of the dam.

Alexander, apprised of the danger which threatened him, spared nothing on his side to meet it with energy. Immediately after getting possession of the dam, he had caused redoubts to be erected at five different places, and had given the command of them to the most experienced officers of the army. The first of these, which was called the Cross Battery, was erected on the spot where the Cowenstein dam enters the great embankment of the Scheldt, and makes with the latter the form of a cross; the Spaniard, Mondragone, was appointed to the command of this battery. A thousand paces farther on, near the castle of Cowenstein, was posted the battery of St. James, which was entrusted to the command of Camillo de Monte. At an equal distance from this, lay the battery of St. George, and at a thousand paces from the latter, the Pile Battery, under the command of Gamboa, so called from the pile-work on which it rested; at the farthest end of the dam, near Stabroek, was the fifth redoubt, where Count Mansfeld, with Capizucchi, an Italian, commanded. All these forts the prince now strengthened with artillery and men; on both sides of the dam, and along its whole extent, he caused piles to be driven, as well to render the main embankment firmer, as to impede the labour of the pioneers, who were to dig through it.

Early on the morning of the 16th of May, the enemy's forces were in motion. With the dusk of dawn, there came floating down from Lillo, over the inundated country, four burning vessels, which so alarmed the guards upon the dams, who recollected the former terrible explosion, that they hastily retreated to the next battery. This was exactly what the enemy desired. In these vessels, which had merely the appearance of fire-ships, soldiers were concealed, who now suddenly jumped ashore, and succeeded in mounting the dam at the undefended spot, between the St. George and Pile batteries. Immediately afterward, the whole Zealand fleet showed itself, consisting of numerous ships of war, transports, and a crowd of smaller craft, which were laden with great sacks of earth, wool, fascines, gabions, and the like, for throwing up breastworks, wherever necessary. The ships of war were furnished with powerful artillery, and numerously and bravely manned, and a whole army of pioneers accompanied it, in order to dig through the dam as soon as it should be in their possession.

The Zealanders had scarcely begun on their side to ascend the dam, when the fleet of Antwerp advanced from Osterweel, and attacked it on the other A high breastwork was hastily thrown up between the two nearest hostile batteries, so as at once to divide the two garrisons and to cover the pioneers. The latter, several hundreds in number, now fell to work with their spades on both sides of the dam, and dug with such energy, that hopes were entertained of soon seeing the two seas united. But, meanwhile, the Spaniards also had gained time to hasten to the spot from the two nearest redoubts, and make a spirited assault, while the guns from the battery of St. George played incessantly on the enemy's fleet. A furious battle now raged in the quarter where they were cutting through the dike, and throwing up the breastwork. The Zealanders had drawn a strong line of troops round the pioneers, to keep the enemy from interrupting their work; and in this confusion of battle, in the midst of a storm of bullets from the enemy, often up to the breast in water, among the dead and dying, the pioneers pursued their work, under the incessant exhortations of the merchants, who impatiently waited to see the dam opened and their vessels in safety. The importance of the result, which it might be said depended entirely upon their spades, appeared to animate even the common labourers with heroic courage. Solely intent upon their task, they neither saw nor heard the work of death, which was going on around them, and as fast as the foremost ranks fell, those behind them pressed into their places. Their operations were greatly impeded by the piles which had been driven in, but still more by the attacks of the Spaniards, who burst with desperate courage through the thickest of the enemy, stabbed the pioneers in the pits where they were digging, and filled up again with dead bodies, the cavities which the living had made. At last, however, when most of their officers were killed or wounded, and the number of the enemy constantly increasing, while fresh labourers were supplying the place of those who had been slain, the courage of these valiant troops began to give way, and they thought it advisable to retreat to their batteries. Now, therefore, the confederates saw themselves masters of the whole extent of the dam, from Fort St. George as far as the Pile Battery As, however, it seemed too long to wait for the thorough demolition of the dam, they hastily unloaded a Zealand transport, and brought the cargo over the dam to a vessel of Antwerp, with which Count Hohenlohe sailed in triumph to that city. The sight of the provisions at once filled the inhabitants with joy, and as if the victory was already won, they gave themselves up to the wildest exultation. The bells were rung, the cannon discharged, and the inhabitants transported at their unexpected success, hurried to the Oster weel gate, to await the store ships, which were supposed to be at hand.

In fact, fortune had never smiled so favourably on the besieged as at that moment. The enemy, exhausted and dispirited, had thrown themselves into their batteries, and far from being able to struggle with the victors for the post they had conquered, they found themselves rather besieged in the places where they had taken refuge. Some companies of Scots, led by their brave colonel, Balfour, attacked the battery of St. George, which, however, was relieved, but not without severe loss, by Camillo di Monte, who hastened thither from the St. James's battery. The Pile battery was in a much worse condition, it being hotly cannonaded by the ships, and threatened every moment to crumble to pieces; Gamboa, who commanded it, lay wounded, and it was unfortunately deficient in artillery to keep the enemy at a distance. The breastwork, too, which the Zealanders had thrown up between this battery and that of St. George, cut off all hope of assistance from the Scheldt. If, therefore, the Belgians had only taken advantage of this weakness and inactivity of the enemy, to proceed with zeal and perseverance in cutting through the dam, there is no doubt that a passage might have been made and thus put an end to the whole siege. But here also, the same want of consistent energy showed itself, which had marked the conduct of the people of Antwerp during the whole course of the siege. The zeal with which the work had been commenced, cooled in proportion to the success which attended it. It was soon found too tedious to dig through the dyke; it seemed far easier to transfer the cargoes from the large store-ships into smaller ones, and carry these to the town with the flood tide. St. Aldegonde and Hohenlohe, instead of remaining to animate the industry of the workmen by their personal presence, left the scene of action in the decisive moment, in order by sailing to the town with a corn vessel, to win encomiums on their wisdom and valour.

While both parties were fighting on the dam with the most obstinate fury, the bridge over the Scheldt had been attacked from Antwerp, with new machines, in order to give employment to the prince in that quarter. But the sound of the firing soon apprised him of what was going on at the dyke and as soon as he saw the bridge clear, he hastened to support the defence of the dyke. Followed by two hundred Spanish pikemen, he flew to the place of attack, and arrived just in time to prevent the complete defeat of his troops. He hastily posted some guns, which he had brought with him, in the two nearest redoubts, and maintained from thence a heavy fire upon the enemy's ships. He placed himself at the head of his men, and with his sword in one hand and shield in the other, led them against the enemy The news of his arrival, which quickly spread from one end of the dyke to the other, revived the drooping spirits of his troops, and the conflict recommenced with renewed violence, made still more murderous by the nature of the ground where it was fought. Upon the narrow ridge of the dam, which in many places was not more than nine paces broad, about five thousand combatants were fighting ; so confined was the spot upon which the strength of both armies was assembled, and which was to decide the whole issue of the siege. With the Antwerpers the last bulwark of their city was at stake, with the Spaniards it was to determine the whole success of their undertaking. Both parties fought with a courage, which despair alone could inspire. From both the extremities of the dam, the tide of war rolled itself towards the centre, where the Zealanders and Antwerpers had the advantage, and where they had collected their whole strength. The Italians and Spaniards, inflamed by a noble emulation, pressed on from Stabroek ; and from the Scheldt, the Walloons and Spaniards advanced with their general at their head. While the former endeavoured to relieve the Pile battery, which was hotly pressed by the enemy both by sea and land, the latter threw themselves on the breastwork, between the St. George and the Pile batteries, with a fury which carried everything before it. Here the flower of the Belgian troops fought behind a well-fortified rampart. and the guns of the two fleets covered this important post The prince was already pressing forward to attack this formidable defence with his small army, when he received intelligence that the Italians and Spaniards, under Capizucchi and Aquila, had forced their way, sword in hand, into the Pile battery, haa got possession of it, and were now likewise advancing from the other side against the enemy's breastwork. Before this entrenchment, therefore, the whole force of both armies was now collected, and both sides used their utmost efforts to carry and to defend this position. The Netherlanders on board the fleet, loath to remain idle spectators of the conflict, sprang ashore from their vessels. Alexander attacked the breastwork on one side, Count Mansfeld on the other; five assaults were made, and five times they were repulsed. The Netherlanders, in this decisive moment, surpassed themselves never in the whole course of the war had they fought with such determination. But it was the Scotch and English in particular, who baffled the attempts of the enemy by their valiant resistance. As no one would advance to the attack in the quarter where the Scotch fought, the duke himself led on the troops, with a javelin in his hand, and up to his breast in water At last, after a protracted struggle, the forces of Count Mansfeld succeeded with their halberds and pikes, in making a breach in the breastwork, and by raising themselves on one another's shoulders, scaled the parapet. Barthelemy Toralva, a Spanish captain, was the first who showed himself on the top; and almost at the same instant, the Italian Capizucchi appeared upon the edge of it; and thus the contest of valour was decided with equal glory for both nations. It is worth while to notice here, the manner in which the Prince of Parma, who was made arbiter of this emulous strife, encouraged this delicate sense of honour among his warriors. He embraced the Italian Capizucchi in presence of the troops, and acknowledged aloud that it was principally to the courage of this officer that he owed the capture of the breastwork. He caused the Spanish Captain Toralva, who was dangerously wounded, to be conveyed to his own quarters at Stabroek, laid on his own bed, and covered with the cloak which he himself had worn the day before the battle

After the capture of the breastwork, the victory no longer remained doubtful. The Dutch and Zealand troops, who had disembarked to come to close action with the enemy, at once lost their courage, when they looked about them and saw the vessels, which were their last refuge, putting off from the shore.

For the tide had began to ebb, and the commanders of the fleet, from fear of being stranded with their heavy transports, and, in case of an unfortunate issue to the engagement, becoming the prey of the enemy, retired from the dam, and made for deep water. No sooner did Alexander perceive this, than he pointed out to his troops the flying vessels, and encouraged them to finish the action with an enemy, who already despaired of their safety. The Dutch auxiliaries were the first that gave way, and their example was soon followed by the Zealanders. Hastily leaping from the dam, they endeavoured to reach the vessels by wading or swimming; but from their disorderly flight, they impeded one another, and fell in heaps under the swords of the pursuers. Many perished even in the boats, as each strove to get on board before the other, and several vessels sank under the weight of the numbers who rushed into them. The Antwerpers, who fought for their liberty, their hearths, their faith, were the last who retreated, but this very circumstance augmented their disaster Many of their vessels were outstripped by the ebb-tide, and grounded within reach of the enemy's cannon, and were consequently destroyed with all on board. Crowds of fugitives endeavoured by swimming to gain the other transports, which had got into deep water; but such was the rage and boldness of the Spaniards, that they swam after them with their swords between their teeth, and dragged many even from the ships. The victory of the king's troops was complete, but bloody; for of the Spaniards about 800, of the Netherlanders some thousands (without reckoning those who were drowned) were left on the field, and on both sides many of the principal nobility perished. More than thirty vessels, with a large supply of provisions for Antwerp, fell into the hands of the victors, with 150 cannon and other military stores. The dam, the possession of which had been so dearly maintained, was pierced in thirteen different places, and the bodies of those who had cut through it were now used to stop up the openings.

The following day, a transport of immense size and singular onstruction, fell into the hands of the royalists. It formed a floating castle, and had been destined for the attack on the Cowenstein dam. The people of Antwerp had built it at an immense expense, at the very time when the engineer Giani belli's useful proposals had been rejected, on account of the cost they entailed, and this ridiculous monster was called by the proud title of "End of the War," which appellation was afterwards changed for the more appropriate sobriquet of 'Money lost!" When this vessel was launched, it turned out, as every sensible person had foretold, that on account of its unwieldy size it was utterly impossible to steer it, and it could hardly be floated by the highest tide. With great difficulty it was worked as far as Ordam, where, deserted by the tide, it went aground, and fell a prey to the enemy.

The attack upon the Cowenstein dam was the last attempt which was made to relieve Antwerp. From this time, the courage of the besieged sank, and the magistracy of the town, vainly laboured to inspirit with distant hopes the lower orders, on whom the present distress weighed heaviest. Hitherto the price of bread had been kept down to a tolerable rate, although the quality of it continued to deteriorate; by degrees, however, provisions became so scarce, that a famine was evidently near at hand. Still hopes were entertained of being able to hold out, at least, until the corn between the town and the farthest batteries, which was already in full ear, could be reaped; but before that could be done, the enemy had carried the last outwork, and had appropriated the whole harvest to their use. At last the neighbouring and confederate town of Malines fell into the enemy's hands, and with its fall vanished the only remaining hope of getting supplies from Brabant. As there was, therefore, no longer any means of increasing the stock of provisions, nothing was left but to diminish the consumers. All useless persons, all strangers, nay even the women and children were to be sent away out of the town, but this proposal was too revolting to humanity to be carried into execution. Another plan, that of expelling the Catholic inhabitants, exasperated them so much, that it had almost ended in open mutiny. And thus St. Aldegonde at last saw himself compelled to yield to the riotous clamours of the populace, and on the 17th of August, 1585, to make overtures to the Duke of Parma for the surrender of the town.

THE RELIGIOUS

DISTURBANCES IN FRANCE

THAT PRECEDED

THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.

TRANSLATED BY

L. DORA SCHMITZ.

THE DISTURBANCES IN FRANCE

THAT PRECEDED THE

REIGN OF HENRY IV.[1]

THE reigns of Charles VIII., Louis XII. and Francis I. had introduced a brilliant period in the history of France. The campaigns of these monarchs in Italy had reawakened in the French nobility the heroic spirit which had been almost stifled in them by the despotism of Louis XI. But enthusiastic chivalrous sentiments were again becoming manifest, and were encouraged by an improved system of politics.

In a struggle with their inexperienced neighbours, the French had learned their superiority. The monarchy had become firmly established and the constitution had assumed a more regular form. The defiant spirit of the all-powerful nobles, hitherto so unmanageable, had been brought within bounds by legislature that demanded obedience from all in common. A regulated system of taxation and a standing army supported and protected the throne, and the king was now something more than a mere noble landed-proprietor in his kingdom.

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[1] From the collection of *Historical Memoires*, Part II., vols. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.—Dr. Rob. Boxberger, in his edition of Schiller, from which the present English translation has been made, says that Schiller's chief authority for this treatise was Anquetil's *Esprit de la Ligne*, and on various occasions quotes corresponding passages from the French author to show how closely Schiller followed his source. Goedeke, says Boxberger, was the first to point out whence Schiller had mainly drawn his material.—TRS.

It was in Italy that the power of France had first been exhibited. The blood shed there by her sons had not, indeed, accomplished anything, but Europe could not withhold its admiration from a nation which had successfully held her own against five enemies, in league with one another, and who had attacked her simultaneously. The light of the fine arts had dawned upon Italy some time previously, and signs of their ennobling influence were already being manifested in gentler customs, and soon began also to exercise their power over their arrogant conquerors; the fine arts of Italy subjugated the genius of the French in the same way as, in former times, Greek art had subdued the spirit of the Romans. Gradually the fine arts found their way likewise across the Savoyian Alps which had been opened up by the wars; and as they received there the protection of an intelligent ruler, and the assistance of the printer's art, they soon flourished upon the grateful soil. The dawn of culture had come, and France was already making rapid strides in civilisation, when this good beginning was brought to an unfortunate standstill by the advent of the new religious doctrines. The spirit of intolerance and insurrection which these called forth, extinguished the small spark of culture, and in its place there appeared the hideous and flaming torch of fanaticism. The unhappy kingdom thus became plunged deeper than ever into its former state of barbarous savageness and suffered all the horrors of a long and destructive civil war; ambition found full scope for its machinations, and the fanatical vehemence of religious disputes caused a general conflagration.

Eager as was the interest with which the one half of Europe upheld the new doctrines, while the other half rebelled against them, and great as was the impetus given by religious fanaticism, still, very worldly passions, for the most part, were the main agents in the great movement, and political circumstances also determined what assistance was to be given to the one or other of the two hostile factions. As is well known, Luther and his doctrines received support in Germany owing to the distrust entertained by different states against the increasing power of Austria, whereas the hatred of Spain and the fear of the Inquisition aided the cause of Protestantism in the Netherlands. And while Gustav Wasa, in Sweden, was quelling a terrible insurrection with the help of the old religion, Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain was endeavouring to secure her tottering throne upon the ruins of that very church. In France the progress of the new religion was affected, on the one hand, by a succession of rulers who were either weak-minded men or under age, on the other hand by a wavering system of state policy and the ambitious intrigues of several of the nobility to get possession of the helm of government.

Accordingly, when the new doctrines are found at this time prostrate in France, while they are in the ascendant, in the one half of Germany, in England in the North, and in the Netherlands, this was assuredly not from any want of courage or coldness on the part of their adherents, or from any want of attempts to push their way, or owing to any spirit of indifference in the nation. A long series of violent disturbances held the fate of the kingdom in a state of doubt; foreign influence, and the accidental circumstances of a new and indirect succession to the throne, which occurred at this very time, necessarily led to the downfall of the Calvinistic Church in France.

The new doctrines preached by Luther had at once found their way into France during the first quarter of the 16th century. Neither the denunciations of the Sorbonne in 1521, nor the resolutions of the French parliament, nor even the anathemas of the bishops, were able to stay the rapid progress which they made among the people, the nobility and some of the clergy. The eagerness with which the sanguine and ingenious French nation is in the habit of meeting every innovation did not fail to manifest itself either among the followers of the Reformation or among their adversaries. Francis I. military government, and the relations of this monarch to the German Protestants, contributed not a little to bring the new religious opinions into rapid circulation among his French subjects. It was in vain that the frightful weapons of fire and sword were, at last, resorted to in Paris; the result was no better than had been the case previously in the Netherlands, in Germany, or in England, and the burning stakes kindled by the fanatical spirit of persecution, served only to illuminate the heroic faith and renown of its victims.

The Reformers possessed weapons for their own defence and for their attacks upon the dominant Church, which were far more effectual than all those which the blind vehemence of the stronger party could raise against them. Refinement of taste and enlightenment were on their side, ignorance and pedantry were the inheritance of their adversaries. The immorality and the gross ignorance of the Catholic clergy presented the most vulnerable points of attack to the wit of the orators and writers of the Reforming party, and it was impossible to read the descriptions which the genius of Satire gave of the general state of depravity, without feeling convinced of the necessity of reformation. The reading world was daily flooded with pamphlets of this kind, where, more or less successfully, the prevailing vices of the Court and of the Catholic clergy were exposed to scorn, contempt, and ridicule, and where the dogmas of the new Church were described with every grace of style, with all the charms of beauty, with all the captivating power of the sublime, and with the irresistible attractions of noble simplicity. These masterpieces of oratory and of wit were devoured with avidity, whereas the insipid or solemn treatises of the hostile party can scarcely be said to have aroused any other feeling than tedium. The Reformers soon won over the intellectual portion of the public, an undoubtedly more brilliant majority than the mere blind advantage of the larger number of adherents which their opponents could boast of.

The continued fury of the persecution finally obliged the oppressed party to seek a protectress in Queen Marguerite of Navarre, a sister of Francis I. And the refinement of taste and the intellectual culture of the Protestants were a sufficient recommendation to this intellectual lady, who was herself a great connoisseur of the Beautiful and the True; it was, therefore, not difficult to win her over to the religion of those who had won her admiration, and upon whose culture and esprit she set so much value. Queen Marguerite was surrounded by a brilliant circle of distinguished men, and the mental freedom which prevailed in this intellectual circle, could not but look with favour upon the new doctrines whose aim was to be freed from the yoke of the hierarchy and of superstition. The oppressed sect found protection at the Court of this Queen; many a victim she rescued from the bloodthirsty persecutors, and the still weak party clung to her for support during the first storm which might otherwise have destroyed it completely in its tender infancy. The treaties which Francis I. made with the German Protestants did not in any way affect the laws enforced against his own Protestant subjects. The sword of the Inquisition was brandished before them in every province, and at the very time that this unprincipled monarch was negotiating with the princes of the Schmalkald league to rise against his rival Charles V., he allowed his bloodthirsty Inquisitors to vent their fury, with fire and sword, upon their co-religionists, the harmless community of the Waldenses. Savage and frightful, says the historian de Thou, was the sentence proclaimed against them, and more savage and frightful still was the manner in which it was carried out. Two-and-twenty villages were burned to the ground, and accompanied by such reckless inhumanity, that it is unparalleled in the annals of the most savage nations. The unfortunate inhabitants were attacked suddenly in the night, driven from mountain to mountain amid the fires that were consuming their belongings, and escaped from one snare, only to fall into another. The heart-rending cries of the aged, of the women and children, far from softening the tiger-hearted soldiers, served only to lead them on to the track of the fugitives, and to betray the victims to their murderous persecutors. More than seven hundred of this unfortunate sect were butchered in cold-blooded cruelty in the one town of Cabrières, all the women of this town were suffocated in the smoke of a burning barn, and those who tried to escape by climbing out at the top, were caught upon spears. Even the land which the industry of this gentle community had transformed from a desert into a flourishing garden, was made to suffer for the supposed religious errors of those who had cultivated it; not only were their houses torn down, but the trees were uprooted, the crops destroyed, the fields laid waste, and the smiling country turned into a melancholy wilderness.

The indignation aroused by this and other useless and unparalleled atrocities induced more persons to join the Protestant faith than were massacred by the inquisitorial zeal of the clergy. The number of adherents to the new faith increased day by day: this had more especially been the case since Calvin of Geneva had come forward with a new religious system. In his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," he defined those doctrines that were still doubtful, gave the whole church service a more regular form, and united under one definite form of faith those members of his church who had hitherto not been quite of one mind with one another. In a short time the stricter but simpler religion of the French apostle, obtained the favour of his countrymen to the exclusion even of Luther; and Calvin's doctrines were the more warmly welcomed the more they were found to outdistance Luther's as regards the Papacy.

The massacre of the Waldenses made the Calvinists come more to the front, for their bitterness of spirit was such, that they no longer thought of fear. They were no longer content to meet in the darkness of night as they had hitherto done, but now ventured to defy the vigilance of the authorities by meeting in public, and chanting Marot's psalms[1] at large gatherings in the suburbs of Paris. The charm of novelty soon attracted all Paris, and the melodiousness and gracefulness of these psalms proved a means by which the new religion found its way into many hearts. This bold step, at the same time, showed the immense increase in the number of their party, and soon afterwards the Protestants in the other parts of the kingdom followed the example set by their brethren in the capital.

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[1] Marot's translation of part of the Psalms into French which had been condemned by the Sorbonne, was completed by Theodore Beza (de Bêze) in 1563 and set to music by him; this version was adopted by the Calvinists of Geneva with the greatest enthusiasm.—Trs.

Henry II., an even more vehement persecutor of the new religion than his father had been, in vain took to his aid all the horrors of punishment at the disposal of a king. It was in vain that the edicts, which condemned the new doctrines, were rendered more stringent. It was in vain that the king so far demeaned himself as to attend the executions with a view to increasing the importance of the sentence, and to encouraging the executioners in their work. In every one of the large cities of France pyres were burning, and yet Henry could not banish Calvinism even from his own immediate surroundings. The new doctrines had found adherents in the army, among the magistracy and even at the Court of St. Germain, and François de Coligny, the Sire d'Andelot, colonel in the French infantry, bluntly told the king to his face that he would rather die than attend a mass.

At last in a state of fear at the constantly increasing danger, to which his people and—as he was led to believe—his very throne was exposed by the new religion, Henry gave his consent to all the violent measures which were suggested to him by the ambition of his courtiers and the unprincipled zeal of the clergy. Hence, in order by some decisive step to break the courage of the party at one blow, the king one day appeared before the assembled parliament, caused five of the members, who had shown themselves in favour of the new doctrines, to be arrested, and ordered them forthwith to be prosecuted. And after this the Reformers met with no mercy. A contemptible band of informers was encouraged by promises of rewards, and all the prisons throughout the kingdom were soon filled with victims to this spirit of intolerance; no one ventured to raise a voice in their favour. The reforming party in France, in 1559, was, in fact, on the verge of its downfall. A powerful and irresistible king, at peace with all Europe, the uncontrolled master of all the forces in his realm, and supported in his undertaking by the Pope and by Spain—had vowed utterly to annihilate it. Only an unexpected piece of good fortune could have prevented this; but it came. The irreconcilable enemy of the new religion died in the midst of these preparations, wounded at a tournament by a splint from a lance which struck him in the eye.

Henry II.'s unexpected death was the commencement of the mischievous disturbances which for half a century distracted the kingdom and almost caused a total collapse of the monarchy. Henry left a widow, Catherine, of the ducal house of the Medicis of Florence, and four young sons, of whom the eldest, Francis, was scarcely sixteen years of age. The king was already married to the young Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, and hence the sceptre of the two kingdoms was in the hands of a youth wholly unequal to govern himself. A host of ambitious men came forward eagerly offering their assistance, and France became the unhappy victim of the struggle that necessarily ensued.

Two powerful factions, more especially, disputed their influence over the two young regents and the government of the kingdom. At the head of one of these two factions stood the Constable of France, Anne de Montmorency, who had been one of the ministers and a favourite of the late king, whom he had served with his sword, and whose stern patriotism was above all temptation. He was a man of equal temperament and resolute character, not discouraged by misfortune or rendered giddy by any form of good fortune. In the preceding reigns he had given ample proof of his self-possession when, with his usual composure and steadfast courage, he had put up with the king's indecision and the change in the fortunes of war. The soldiers and the courtiers, the financiers and the judges all feared the searching eye of the man who was never blinded by any deception, feared his spirit of order which never forgave a false step, and his steadfast virtue which no temptation could ever shake. But, having been educated in the rough school of war, and accustomed to act as the head of the army and to enforce implicit obedience, Montmorency lacked the pliability of the statesman and courtier, who gain their ends by yielding, and command by submitting. He was great in the military arena, but lost his reputation in the other, to which the force of circumstances now called him, and which his own ambition and patriotism obliged him to enter. A man like Montmorency was nowhere in the right place except where he could command, he was a man born to hold a foremost position, though not a man to obtain it with the courtier's address.

The Constable's great experience; the services he had rendered to the State, which even envy could not ignore; his honesty, which even his enemies held in reverence; his favour with the late monarch, and the fact of his belonging to an illustrious family, all this seemed to strengthen Montmorency's right to occupy the first position in the kingdom, and to out-distance every other claim. But it required a *man* to appreciate the services of *such* a servant, and a serious interest in the common weal to overlook the rough exterior of the Constable's inner worth. Francis II. was a youth to whom the possession of a throne meant pleasure, not work; and who therefore was not likely to welcome a stern guardian over his actions. Montmorency's austere virtue, which had obtained for him the favour of the father and grandfather of Francis II., was considered a failing by the present weak and frivolous-minded king; hence, it proved an easy task for the hostile party to triumph over this adversary.

The Guises, a branch of the princely house of Lorraine which had settled in France, were the life and soul of this terrible and hostile faction. Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise and uncle to the Queen, combined in his person all the qualities for riveting the attention of men, and for acquiring power over them. The French regarded him as the saviour of their country, as the man who had restored the country its honour in the sight of all Europe. It was his ability and his courage that had given the death-blow to the advances of Charles V.; his determination that had successfully wiped out the dishonour of their ancestors, and taken Calais from the English, their last possession on French territory, after having occupied the country for two centuries. His name was in every one's mouth, and admiration of him animated the hearts of all. He had the keen foresight of a statesman and a general, as well as the courage of a hero, and the pliability of a courtier. Fortune and nature had both marked him out to be a ruler of men. Of noble figure, stately presence, royal bearing, and frank, pleasant manners, the Duke captivated the eye before he had subjugated the minds of those he met. His illustrious rank and power enhanced the natural dignity of his presence, which did not seem to require any outward decoration to proclaim him a ruler of men. He was condescending without forgetting his rank, ready to converse with persons far beneath him, easy of manner, and communicative without disclosing the secrets of his policy, extravagant towards his friends and generous towards a defenceless foe, while it seemed to be his endeavour to propitiate envy by his greatness, and the pride of a jealous nation by his power. All of these excellent qualities he employed, however, only as instruments for satisfying his inordinate and passionate ambition which, undaunted by any obstacle and heedless of every consideration, marched fearlessly on towards its high-set goal, and, being favoured by the general state of disorder, his ambition pursued its headstrong course through all the intricacies of the cabals, and with all the terrors of power, regardless of how it affected the fate of thousands of his fellow-men. The same species of ambition—though not accompanied by as many natural gifts—filled the mind of the Duke's brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, who was as powerful as an erudite scholar and practised orator, as the Duke was with his sword, and, indeed, more formidable in his scarlet robes than the Duke in his coat of mail; his private passions were protected by the sword of religion, and the dark intrigues of his ambitious spirit were likewise concealed by this sacred veil. As one mutual endeavour animated the minds of these irresistible brothers, they succeeded in obtaining complete control over the nation, which found itself in their chains before it was aware what had happened.

It was an easy matter for the two brothers to gain complete control over the young king's mind, for his consort was a niece of theirs and had unlimited influence over her husband; it was more difficult to win over to their interests the Queen-mother Catherine. The very name of Queen-mother made her powerful at a court divided against itself, but she became even more powerful owing to the natural superiority of her intellect over the mind of her weak son; her reserved nature, which was, however, quick at concocting intrigues, and was combined with an unlimited desire to rule, rendered her a formidable adversary. To win her favour, therefore, no sacrifice was spared, no condescension evaded. No duty was held so sacred as not to be avoided to flatter her interests; no friendship was considered so firmly established as not to be broken or sacrificed to satisfy her spirit of revenge; no feeling of enmity was so deeply rooted as not to be overlooked if the individual happened to be one of her favourites. At the same time, everything was done to prejudice Queen Catherine against the Constable, and the conspirators actually succeeded in preventing any dangerous league between her and the general.

The Constable, meanwhile, had made every effort to form a party sufficiently strong to rival the Lorraine faction. Almost immediately after Henry II.'s death, Montmorency called upon all the princes of the blood—more especially Antoine of Bourbon, King of Navarre—to take possession of those offices which their rank entitled them to hold. But before these princes had time to come forward, the Guises had already got control of the king. And the king informed the deputation from parliament, which brought him the congratulations of the assembly upon his accession to the throne, that henceforth any matters of state business must be referred to the princes of Lorraine. The Duke further took the command of the army, and the Cardinal took as his share the important office of administrator of the treasury. Montmorency was calmly told to retire to his estate in the country. The dissatisfied princes of the blood thereupon held a meeting at Vendôme, which the Constable directed from a distance, and measures were discussed with respect to their common enemy. In accordance with the resolutions passed, the King of Navarre repaired to court to make a last attempt to negotiate with the Queen-mother, before any violent means were resorted to. The commission, however, was entrusted to too inexperienced a hand for it to gain its object. Antoine of Navarre, owing to his fear of the supreme power of the Guises, who received him in the full splendour of their glory, left Paris and the court without having accomplished anything, and the princes of Lorraine remained masters of the situation.

This easy victory made the two brothers bold, their proceedings now began to exceed all bounds; and, having control over the public money, they spent endless sums in rewarding their creatures. Posts of honour, stipends, and pensions were distributed with a liberal hand; but this extravagance only increased the avarice of the recipients, as well as the number of the applicants for favours, and hence what the brothers Lorraine accomplished with the smaller portion of their party, they lost with the much larger portion, who were dismissed empty-handed. And the greed with which they themselves appropriated the better part of what belonged to the State, the defiant insolence with which they took possession of the highest offices of the State to the exclusion of all the most illustrious families, aroused wide-spread indignation; nothing, however, gave more offence to the nation than what occurred at Fontainebleau through the presumptuous arrogance of the Cardinal of Lorraine. At this royal country-seat, where the court was residing at the time, the king's presence had attracted a great concourse of people, who had come there either with a view to ask for their salaries, or for pensions or rewards due to them for services rendered. The vehemence of these persons, among whom were some of the most distinguished officers of the army, annoyed the Cardinal. And in order to be rid of them without further ado, he had a gallows erected close to the royal palace, and a proclamation read by a public crier, declaring that all those—whatever might be their position—who had come to Fontainebleau with the object of presenting petitions, were to quit the place within four-and-twenty hours, or to forfeit their life at the gallows. Such treatment Frenchmen never tolerate, and of all nations tolerate least of all from their king. Fontainebleau was, it is true, rid of the unwelcome guests in a single day, but the seeds of discontent, thus sown in a thousand hearts, were soon disseminated over all the provinces of the kingdom.

Owing to the progress which Calvinism had made in France towards the end of Henry II.'s reign, it became a matter of the utmost importance what measures the new ministers meant to employ to check it. The Lorraine brothers were both zealous adherents of the Papacy, from religious conviction as well as from personal interests, and perhaps they were even at this time inclined to seek support from Spain against the force of circumstances; still they saw the necessity of winning over the larger and more powerful half of the nation, whether by a real or affected religious enthusiasm; and, accordingly, they could not for a moment have been in doubt as to which party they should join. Henry II., shortly before his death, had resolved utterly to crush Calvinism, and, indeed, the system of persecution already begun, only required to be allowed free play to accomplish this object. The interval of peace enjoyed by the Protestants after Henry II. death was, therefore, a very short one. The spirit of persecution blazed up again in all its fury, and the princes of Lorraine were all the more eager vehemently to oppose the Protestants, as the latter had for long secretly favoured many of their enemies.

The prosecution of the celebrated parliamentary councillor, Anne du Bourg, proclaimed to the nation the bloody measures which the new government were about to employ. Du Bourg died at the gallows for his steadfastness to his religious principles; the other four members of the Council, who had been arrested with him, received more merciful treatment. This unequivocal and public proceeding of the Guises against Calvinism offered the discontented nobility a welcome opportunity for stirring up all the Reformed party against the ministers, and for making the question of their own aggrieved ambition a question of religion, a matter affecting the whole Protestant Church. Accordingly there now took place an unfortunate confounding of political difficulties with religious interests, and, in fact, religious fanaticism was appealed to, to assist political oppression. By showing the distrustful Calvinists somewhat more toleration, the Guises managed to withdraw considerable support from those nobles who were furious at having had their claims summarily dismissed, and thus succeeded in crushing a civil war in its very birth. But by driving these two parties—the malcontents and the now pretty numerous body of Calvinists—to extremes, the Guises forced them to seek aid of each other, to make their revenge and their fear a common cause, their different grievances mutual wrongs, and to unite their scattered forces against the one dangerous faction. Henceforth the Calvinist regarded the Guises only as the oppressors of his religion, and any one persecuted by them was the victim of their spirit of intolerance, and demanded revenge. Henceforth the Catholic, on the other hand, regarded the Guises only as the protectors of his Church, and any one who rebelled against them was a Huguenot whose only endeavour was to upturn the true Church. Every faction now received a leader, and every ambitious noble became the head of a more or less formidable party. The signal for a general division was given, and the whole of the deluded nation was drawn into the private quarrels of a few dangerous men.

At the head of the Calvinists stood the princes of Bourbon, Antoine of Navarre, and Louis Prince of Condé, and also the famous family of Chatillon, distinguished in history through the name of Admiral Coligny. The voluptuous Prince of Condé was unwilling enough to tear himself away from the lap of pleasure to become the leader of a party against the Guises; but their excessive arrogance, and a succession of insults which he had experienced at their hands, finally roused his slumbering ambition from an indolent state of sensuality; the urgent entreaties of the Chatillons forced him at last to exchange the couch of voluptuousness for the arena of politics and of war. The house of Chatillon was at this time represented by three incomparable brothers, of whom the eldest, Admiral Coligny, served his country with his military genius, his sagacity, and his enduring courage; the second brother, François d'Andelot, with his sword; and the third brother, Cardinal de Chatillon and Bishop of Beauvais, with his diplomatic gifts and his astuteness. A rare harmony of sentiments rendered these brothers, who in other respects were very different in character, a formidable trio, and the honours they had received, the connections they enjoyed, and the esteem in which their name was universally held, gave weight to the cause of which they now became the leaders.

At one of the castles belonging to the Prince of Condé, on the borders of Picardy, the malcontents held a secret meeting, at which it was resolved to carry off the king from the midst of his ministers, and, at the same time, to capture the latter dead or alive. Matters had come to such a pass that the monarch was looked upon as a mere nonentity, a person of no importance in himself, but one who might become a fearful instrument of power in the hands of those who obtained control over him. As this bold plot could be carried out only by force of arms, it was further determined at the same meeting to raise a body of soldiers which, in order not to arouse suspicion, was to be formed of a number of small bands of men, drawn from all the various districts of the kingdom, and to meet at Blois, where the court was expected to spend the spring months. As this whole proceeding was represented to be a religious undertaking, it was considered certain that very powerful assistance would be rendered by the Calvinists, who now numbered somewhere about two million persons. Many of the staunchest Catholics, however, also joined the party, it having been represented to them that the conspiracy was aimed solely at the Guises. In order as far as possible to conceal the fact that the Prince of Condé was the actual head of the whole conspiracy—he considering it advisable to remain invisible for a time—a subordinate but visible leader was appointed in the person of Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord. Renaudie was peculiarly well fitted for the post, owing to his undaunted courage—of which he had given ample proof in the difficult and dangerous enterprises he had been engaged in—owing to his indefatigable energy, and also his connections in the State and among the Calvinists who had emigrated. On account of some crime, Renaudie had for long been accustomed to play the part of a fugitive, and this further taught him the art of secrecy, which his present post now demanded of him, and was, in fact, imperative as far as his own life was concerned. The whole party regarded him as a resolute man equal to any emergency, and his bold self-confidence which helped him over every difficulty, he succeeded in communicating to all the members of the conspiracy.

The preparations were all most successfully made, and every possible eventuality was taken into account, in order that matters might be as little left to chance as possible. Renaudie received full instructions and nothing, in fact, was omitted that could in any way contribute to the successful issue of the plot. The real though secret leader, it was said, would present himself and disclose his name as soon as all was ready. Renaudie, in 1560, assembled his nobles at Nantes, in Bretagne, where parliament was holding its meetings at the time, and a number of entertainments were being given, an opportunity for these having been found in the occasion of the marriage of one of the nobility in the neighbourhood, and all these gaieties offered an appropriate excuse for the large concourse of people. Similar circumstances were made use of some years later by the Gueuses in Brussels, when preparing their conspiracy against the Spanish minister Granvella. In a speech full of eloquence and fire, which has been handed down to us by the historian de Thou, Renaudie revealed to those who were still ignorant of it, the object of their meeting, and endeavoured to rouse the others to take an active interest in the cause. Everything was said that could place the Guises in the most detestable light, while all the troubles the nation had experienced since they entered France, were, with consummate craftiness, also laid to their charge. It was stated that their design in keeping the princes of the blood and the worthiest and most eminent men from the king's presence and from all the offices of state, was to make the young monarch—who, being delicate, was clearly not in the safest protection in such hands—a blind tool to their will; and that their object was to pave the way for their own family obtaining possession of the French throne, even though this should have to be done by exterminating the whole royal family. Accordingly it was said that there was no resolution, however bold, no proceeding against them, however criminal, that honour itself and the purest form of patriotism would not justify, nay, demanded. "As for me," exclaimed the orator in conclusion with a violent change of manner, "I vow and declare, and take Heaven to witness that I have no wish to think, to say or to do anything against the king, against his mother the Queen, or against the princes of his blood; but I further declare that while I have breath in my body, I shall defend the majesty of the throne and the liberty of my country against the interventions of these foreigners."

A declaration of this kind could not fail to exercise its influence upon men who—irritated by numerous private grievances, and excited by the turmoils of the times and blind religious zeal—were capable of the most violent determinations. The whole assembly with one voice repeated this vow, which was then drawn up in writing, and confirmed by grasps of hands and embraces. It is remarkable what similarity there was between the demeanour of these conspirators at Nantes, and the confederates in Brussels. In Brussels as well as at Nantes, the object of the conspirators seemed to be a desire to defend their lawful ruler against the interferences of his ministers, while, on the other hand, they did not hesitate to trample upon one of the most precious rights of the lawful sovereign himself, viz. liberty to choose his own ministers; in both cases it was made to appear as if the State had to be protected against oppression, whereas it was obviously being plunged into all the horrors of a civil war. After the assembly had resolved what measures were to be adopted, and having fixed upon the 15th of May, 1560, as the appointed day, and the town of Blois as the scene of action, the conspirators separated, the nobles all returning to their own provinces to collect the necessary bands of men. Everything was accomplished most successfully, and the secrecy of the plot was in no way affected by the number of persons necessary for carrying it out. Each soldier agreed to follow his captain without knowing the enemy whom he was expected to attack. From the more distant provinces small bodies of men were already marching towards the appointed place of meeting, and increased in numbers the nearer they approached their destination. Troops were thus being amassed in the centre of the kingdom, while the Guises were slumbering in careless security at Blois, to which place they had taken the king. A dark hint, warning them of the plot against them, at last aroused them from this state of indifference, and induced them to remove the court from Blois to Amboise, a town which, owing to possessing citadels, would, it was hoped, be able to withstand a sudden attack longer than Blois.

The effect of this parrying-thrust demanded only a small alteration in the plans of the conspirators, but did not in any way essentially change their determination. Everything proceeded without interruption, and the Guises owed their ultimate deliverance neither to their own watchfulness, nor to the treachery of any one of the confederates, but purely to accident. Renaudie himself was guilty of the indiscretion of revealing the entire plot to a friend with whom he was living at the time, to one Avenelles, an advocate in Paris, and Avenelles' uneasy conscience was unable to keep so terrible a secret to himself. He communicated it to one of the private secretaries of the Duke of Guise, who took Avenelles forthwith to Amboise to make him repeat his information to the Duke in person. And if the ministers' calmness of mind had hitherto been great, their terror, suspicion and dismay now became equally great. Every one around them was regarded with distrust. The very cells in the prisons were searched in the hope that they might get to the bottom of the plot. And as the Chatillons were, justly enough, suspected of knowing something about it, a plausible pretext was made, summoning them to Amboise in order that their movements might be watched. When they were asked their opinion of the present state of affairs, Coligny did not hesitate to express himself against the ministers, and to defend the cause of the Reformers in the strongest terms. His statements, together with the existing fear of conspiracies, exercised so great an influence upon most members of the States-General that an edict was published granting the Reformers security against persecution, with the exception of those who preached the new doctrines and those who had taken part in any acts of violence. But this contrivance came too late, and the neighbourhood of Amboise began to be filled with the conspirators. Condé himself appeared with a large retinue, so as to be ready to assist the insurgents at the decisive moment. It had been arranged that a number of them—under the pretext of presenting a petition—should proceed wholly unarmed towards the gates of Amboise, and, unless they met with resistance, take possession of the streets and walls by the sheer force of their superior numbers. For the sake of protection they were to be accompanied by a few troops, who at the first sign of resistance were to hurry up, and together with the foot-soldiers—scattered round about the town—were to take possession of the gates. And while this was taking place outside of the town, those of the conspirators concealed within the walls, for the most part Condé's own retinue, were to take to their weapons and to secure the Guises, either alive or dead. The Prince of Condé was thereupon publicly to proclaim himself the head of the party and to seize the reins of government without further difficulty.

This whole plan of operation was treacherously communicated to the Duke of Guise, who was hence obliged to resort to more definite measures. He forthwith raised a body of soldiers, and despatched orders to the governors of all the provinces to disperse any bands of armed men that were on their way to Amboise. All the nobility of the neighbouring districts were summoned to arm in defence of their monarch. Further, all those persons in Amboise most suspected of favouring the conspirators, were, under pretext of being sent on important commissions, removed from the neighbourhood, while the Chatillons and the Prince of Condé were given occupation in the town, but their every movement was watched; the king's body-guard was changed, and those gates of the town which the conspirators had proposed to attack were walled up. Outside of the town a number of flying squadrons were engaged in dispersing or beating down suspicious-looking arrivals, and the gallows awaited those who were unfortunate enough to fall into their hands alive.

It was amid these disadvantageous circumstances that Renaudie reached Amboise. One body of conspirators after another came up undeterred by the fate of their comrades in front. Their leader did all he could to encourage those that were fighting, to collect those who had been scattered, and to urge those who were retreating to hold their ground. At a moment when he was separated from his own men, and with but one man with him, Renaudie was surrounded by a troop of royal horse and shot after a most brave resistance. His body was carried to Amboise, where it was hung on the gallows, the words "Head of the Rebels" being inscribed above it.

An edict was issued immediately after this occurrence, granting full pardon to all those of Renaudie's fellow-conspirators who would at once lay down their arms. Many who trusted this proclamation set about making a retreat, but had soon reason to repent. Those of the conspirators who remained made one final attempt to seize the town of Amboise, but like all their previous attempts it proved unsuccessful; upon this the patience of the Guises was exhausted, and they even withdrew the pardon that had been proclaimed. The governors of the various provinces received orders to seize all the retreating bands, and in Amboise itself the most frightful proceedings were taken against every one of whom the Guises were in any way suspicious. In Amboise, and in fact throughout the kingdom, the blood of these unfortunate persons was shed, and the victims themselves were often scarcely aware of the crime for which they were put to death. Without any form of legal trial whatsoever, they were bound hand and foot, and thrown into the Loire, for the executioners were unable to overtake all the work. Only a few persons of high standing were reserved for a formal trial, in order that the solemn judgment of the law-court might give additional effect to the bloody scenes that had already been enacted.

But while this conspiracy thus came to an untimely end, and many of its innocent tools were being sacrificed to the vengeance of the Guises, the Prince of Condé, who was the most culpable member of the whole party and the invisible leader of the plot, played his part with unparalleled dissimulation, and even ventured to defy the suspicion which was raised against him on all sides. Basing his defence upon the impenetrability of his secret, and aware that even torture could not extract from his adherents what they themselves did not know, Condé demanded an audience of the king, and insisted upon being allowed formally and publicly to justify himself. And this he did before the whole assembled court and the foreign ambassadors, who had been specially invited to attend, and spoke with the noble air of indignation of a falsely accused man, with all the decision and dignity that, as a rule, is exhibited only by the consciousness of a righteous cause. "If," he said in conclusion, "if any one were bold enough to accuse me of being the author of this conspiracy, and to maintain that it was my intention to incite Frenchmen against the sacred person of their king, I should forthwith renounce the privileges of my rank, and be ready to prove with my sword that it was a lie."—"And I," exclaimed Francis of Guise interrupting him, "I will never permit so dark a suspicion to disgrace the name of so renowned a prince. Permit me, therefore, to act as your second in this duel." Such was the farce which brought to a close one of the bloodiest conspiracies known in history, and one which was as remarkable for the object in view and the great crisis that was at stake, as for the secrecy and craftiness with which it was conducted.

For long afterwards opinions differed as to the real motives and the actual object of this conspiracy; the private interests of both parties induced them to give false representations. The Reformers, on the one hand, maintained in their writings that the insurrection was purely the result of the ill-feeling aroused by the intolerable tyranny of the Guises, and that they had no thought whatever of attempting to obtain their religious freedom by violent means; on the other hand, in the royal letters, the conspiracy was represented as directed against the king's person and against the whole royal family, that the object was nothing less than an attempt to overthrow the monarchy as well as the Catholic religion, and to turn France into a Republic, somewhat similar to that of Switzerland. It would seem as if the better portion of the nation were of a different opinion, and believed that the Guises devised this excuse merely to help themselves out of their difficulty, and to direct the continued ill-feeling against them into another channel. The sympathy aroused for the unhappy victims of the Guises' vengeance, made even zealous Catholics inclined to judge them more leniently, and the Protestants themselves became bold enough publicly to admit their share in the plot. This unfavourable disposition among the people showed the ministers more forcibly than any open rebellion could have done, that it was time to adopt gentler measures; and thus even the failure of the conspiracy of Amboise procured for the Calvinists in France somewhat more tolerance.

Under the pretext, it was said, of destroying the seeds of dissension, and of quieting the country in a peaceful manner, it was decided to hold a national Council of all the Notables in the kingdom. The ministers accordingly summoned the princes of the blood, the high nobility, the knights, and the chief magistrates to Fontainebleau, where important questions were to be discussed. This assembly, however, did not fulfil either the expectations of the nation, or the intentions of the Guises; for the suspicions entertained by the Bourbons would not allow them to attend the meeting, and the other leaders of the malcontents who could not well refuse to obey the summons, brought a hostile spirit into the assembly, and placed their adversaries in a difficult position by appearing with a numerous and well-armed retinue. To judge by the subsequent steps taken by the ministers, it would seem that the Bourbons' suspicions of false-play were not altogether unfounded; they considered the meeting a mere device of the Guises to get the leaders of the hostile party into their power without bloodshed. This stratagem was frustrated by the wise tactics of the hostile party, and hence the conference ended in empty formalities and useless deliberations, and the disputed points were finally referred to a meeting of the States-General which was to be held almost directly at Orleans.

The different parties, all of whom distrusted one another, made use of the interim in putting themselves in a state of defence and in working at the downfall of the others. The failure of the conspiracy of Amboise had not put a stop to the intrigues of the Prince of Condé. In Dauphiné and other districts he stirred up the Calvinists by means of secret agents, and ordered his adherents to take up arms. The Duke of Guise, on the other hand, had all the towns he suspected occupied by his soldiery, changed the commanders of the different fortresses, and spared himself neither money nor trouble in endeavouring to obtain information of the movements of the Bourbons. Several of their agents were discovered and cast into chains; and various important papers which threw light upon their machinations fell into his hands. By these means the Duke succeeded in getting on to the track of the mischievous intrigues which Condé was plotting against him, and which Condé intended to carry into effect at the meeting of the States-General at Orleans. And this very meeting of the States-General, in fact, made the Bourbons feel somewhat uncomfortable, for there seemed to be danger in connection with it, whether they attended the meeting or not. If they again refused to obey the king's summons they would risk losing their possessions; and yet if they placed themselves in their enemy's power, there was as much risk regarding their own personal safety. After long deliberations, however, they resolved upon adopting the latter course, and both of the Bourbon princes determined upon this unlucky step.

Under these melancholy forebodings, the time of the meeting approached; but in place of that mutual confidence so necessary for uniting the head and the various members of the assembly, for one definite purpose, and the mutual forbearance necessary for laying the foundation of a lasting reconciliation—suspicion and ill-feeling filled every heart. In place of the expected peaceful sentiments, the different parties at the assembly all showed an implacable spirit and sinister intentions, and the sacred abode of public security and of peace was turned into a terrible scene of treachery and revenge. The fear of assassination had poisoned the young king's peace of mind, for the Guises were for ever holding up this prospect to him; he was visibly fading away in the flower of years, believing, in his terror, that his nearest relatives might draw their daggers to strike him, and saw the grave opening up at his feet, amid all the indications of wide-spread misery. The king's entry into Orleans was a melancholy one and foreboded misfortune; the dull clang of armed bodies of men, prevented any outburst of joy. The whole town at once became filled with soldiers, who took possession of all the gates and of all the streets. Such unusual proceedings aroused trouble and anxiety, and led the people to fear that some dark deed was contemplated.

A report of this reached the Bourbons even before they had got as far as Orleans, and made them hesitate whether or not to continue their journey.

But even though they had changed their intention, it would have been too late now; for a reconnoitring body of the king's troops had already encircled them on all sides and cut off every means of retreat. On the 30th of October, 1560, they appeared at Orleans accompanied by their brother the Cardinal of Bourbon, whom the king had sent to meet them with solemn assurances of his honourable intentions.

The reception they met with, however, greatly belied these assurances. The cold demeanour of the ministers themselves, and the embarrassed manners of the other persons at court, plainly told them their fate. The king's face assumed an expression of ominous seriousness when they presented themselves to pay their respects to him, and he then almost at once began a series of the most vehement accusations against the Prince of Condé. All the crimes he had previously been taxed with, were now hurled at him again, one after the other, and an order for his arrest was given before Condé had time to answer the unexpected charges.

Such hurried proceedings could, moreover, not be done by halves. Papers which incriminated the prisoner, were ready at hand to prove the charges, and a list of his public statements proclaiming him guilty, had also been collected; some form of legal trial was all that was now necessary. A special commission was appointed, drawn from the Paris parliament, and presided over by the Chancellor l'Hopital. It was in vain that the prince appealed to the privilege of his rank, according to which he could be judged only by the king, the peers and the parliament at a full meeting. He was forced to give an answer, and his enemies craftily managed that some private paper—which was intended for the Prince's advocate but had unfortunately been signed by the prince—was his formal judicial defence. It was in vain that Condé's friends and his family interceded on his behalf; in vain that his wife threw herself at the king's feet. For the king regarded him only as the would-be usurper of his crown, and his would-be murderer. It was in vain also that the King of Navarre humbled himself before the Guises; they rejected his appeal with contempt and harshness. Indeed while pleading for his brother, the assassin's dagger might be said to have been hanging over his own head by a slender thread. In the king's own chamber a band of assassins were awaiting their victim, ready at a given sign to fall upon him, as soon as the king by addressing him angrily gave them the sign. But the sign was not given and Antoine of Navarre quitted the monarch's apartment unharmed; the king had been ignoble enough to sanction an assassination, but was too faint-hearted to allow it to be perpetrated in his presence.

The Guises were more determined in their proceedings against Condé, the more so as the king's failing health bade them use despatch. The sentence of death had already been pronounced against him and been signed by some of the judges, when the king fell dangerously ill and no hopes were entertained of his recovery. This important circumstance made Condé's adversaries hesitate, and raised the hopes of his friends; the condemned prince himself was soon informed of the change of circumstances. With marvellous composure and unclouded cheerfulness of mind Condé awaited his fate, separated from the world and surrounded by keepers who were hostile to him. "No settlement except at the point of the sword," had been his answer. And had it not been for the timely death of the king, Condé would have paid for these unlucky words with his head.

Francis II. had ascended the throne at such an early age, under such unfavourable circumstances and with such poor health, and was so soon removed from his position by death, that it is scarcely fair to blame him for the disturbances which created such storms during his reign and which continued during the reign of his successor. The young king was a will-less instrument in the hands of the Queen-mother and of the Guises, his uncles; he appeared in the political arena merely in order, mechanically to recite the part which had been drilled into him, and it would probably be demanding too much of his mediocre gifts to have expected them to have broken through the tissue of falsehoods in which the Guises concealed the truth from him. It seems that once only did his natural reason and amiability of disposition attempt to unravel the treacherous machinations of his ministers. The universal and vehement indignation which manifested itself at the time of the conspiracy of Amboise, it had been impossible to keep altogether from the king's knowledge, carefully as the Guises had him watched. His own heart told him that this outbreak of fury could not have been directed against himself, for he had, as yet, done too little to call forth any one's wrath. "What is it I have done to my people," he enquired of his uncles in dismay, "that they should be so enraged with me? I must learn what their grievances are, so that I may procure them justice. It strikes me that it must be you they mean," he continued; "I should really like you to withdraw from my side for a time, to see which of us is at fault." However, the Guises were not at all disposed for any such a proceeding, and this passing emotion of the king's did not lead to anything.[1]

Francis II. died without issue, and the sceptre passed into the hands of the second son of Henry II., a prince of only ten years of age, that unfortunate youth whose name will eternally be associated with the horrors of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. And, indeed, this dark reign began under very unhappy forebodings. One near relative of the king's is about to mount the gallows, another has only just escaped falling by the hands of assassins; the nation is divided into two hostile factions, and one party already with sword in hand; the torch of fanaticism is being brandished on high; the dull thunder of civil war is already rumbling in the distance; the whole kingdom, is, in fact, on the road to its downfall; there is treachery within court circles, and discord and distrust even within the royal household. The disposition of the nation manifests a contradictory and ominous mixture of blind superstition, of ludicrous mysticism and of free thought, of coarseness of feeling and refined sensuality; on the one hand are men whose minds are darkened by a fanatical kind of monastic religion, on the other, men who have become savage through a worse kind of unbelief; both extremes of madness are united in a fearful bond. Among the nobility even, are men accustomed to murder, and lips accustomed to betray; unnatural and revolting vices are rife, and speedily enough infect every class of the people with their poisons. The throne is occupied by a minor who has been nursed in Macchiavellian arts, reared amid the tumults of civil strife, educated by fanatics and flatterers, trained in deception, who is unacquainted with the obedience shown by a contented people, unaccustomed to forgive, and conscious only that as a ruler he possesses the terrible privilege of punishing, while warfare and executions have accustomed him to the sight of bloodshed among his subjects! From the miseries of open warfare the kingdom is now hurled into the dreadful entanglements of a secret and lurking conspiracy; and from the anarchy of being governed by a minor, it is saved only by a short and terrible calm during which assassins sharpen their weapons. The most disastrous period in French history begins with the accession of Charles IX.; it endures over a life-time, and is not brought to a close till the glorious reign of Henry IV. of Navarre.

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[1] See Anquetil, vol. i., p. 49 f.

The death of her eldest son and the extreme youth of Charles IX. brought the Queen-mother Catherine de Medicis into the political arena, and with her came a new system of policy and new scenes of misery. This princess, who was ambitious of ruling, born to intrigue, practised in deceit, and a mistress in all arts of dissimulation, had impatiently borne the checks which the presumptuous despotism of the Guises had put upon her love of dominion. They were submissive and ingratiating in their manner towards her, as long as they required her support against Montmorency and the princes of Bourbon, but neglected her altogether as soon as they considered their own usurped dignity sufficiently firmly established. But to find that she was shut out from her son's confidence by these foreigners, and to see the most important state business transacted without her knowledge, was too mortifying an insult to her ambition for her calmly to tolerate such treatment. Her ruling desire was to be considered of importance, her happiness was to know herself necessary to both parties. There was nothing she would not sacrifice to this passion. Her activity was, however, limited to the domain of intrigue, but her talents were there brilliantly displayed. Intrigue alone was important to her; her fellow-creatures were of no value to her. As queen-regent and the mother of three kings, and called upon to fulfil the difficult duty of asserting the disputed authority of her house against turbulent factions, Catherine had to meet the arrogance of the nobles with duplicity, and force with cunning. For some time she pursued a wavering policy, keeping midway between the two hostile factions, which were headed by the Guises and the princes of Bourbon, and was unable to take any fixed or definite course of action. At one time, when the feeling of irritation against the Guises was uppermost in her heart, she would side with the Reformers, and yet, if it suited her purpose, she would, unblushingly, the very next day endeavour to get these same Guises to become her tools, they having meanwhile, perhaps, flattered her wishes in some way. She would then not hesitate for a moment to disclose all the secrets which had been incautiously confided to her. Her one ruling vice, but one which is the mother of all the others, was her inability to distinguish between good and bad. The customs of the time trifled with her morality, and she was equally disposed, according to the moment, to atrocious cruelty or to clemency, to submissiveness or arrogance, to truth or falsehood. All her passions were eclipsed by her selfishness, and even revenge had to give way if her own interests demanded it. Hers was a dreadful character, no less revolting than the characters of those infamous wretches in history, which a rough brush depicts as monsters.

But although Queen Catherine was without any moral virtues, she exhibited all the talents of her rank, all the virtues of her position, all the advantages of intellect, compatible with a character of this kind; but she degraded them all by making them the mere instruments of her disposition. Majesty and royal dignity were exhibited by her presence; splendour and refinement of taste were displayed in all her surroundings; every eye was captivated by her, provided the look did not penetrate to her soul; all who approached her were charmed by her grace of manner, by her brilliant and intellectual conversation, by her considerate kindness. Never had the French court known such brilliancy till Catherine became Queen of the court. All the refined customs of Italy she introduced on to French soil, and a light-hearted gaiety reigned at the court even during the time of the horrors perpetrated by fanaticism, and the misery produced by the civil wars. All the fine arts were encouraged by her, and all other merits—except those in the good cause—won her admiration. But the blessings introduced by Catherine into her adopted country were accompanied by lurking and mischievous poisons which affected the morals of the nation, and produced an unfortunate species of giddiness. The younger persons at court, whom the new ideas relieved from the constraint of the old customs and cast into loose ways, soon, without further ado, gave themselves up wholly to their love of pleasure; but in throwing aside the dress of their ancestors they threw aside all feelings of modesty and virtue as well. Deceit and dissimulation drove the grand truthfulness of the days of chivalry from social intercourse, and the most precious Palladium of the state—fidelity and faith—vanished, both from the midst of the family circle and from public life.[1] The astrological fancies which Queen Catherine brought with her from her native country, gave a powerful stimulus to superstition; this freak of the court rapidly found its way down to the lower classes and became a mischievous weapon in the hands of fanaticism. But the most unfortunate gifts Catherine presented to France were the three kings, her sons, whom she brought up in her ideas, and placed on the throne with her principles.

By the laws of nature as well as those of the state, Queen Catherine was called upon to act as regent during the minority of her son; but the circumstances under which the regency came into her hands were very discouraging. The States-General were assembled at Orleans; a spirit of independence had been aroused; and two formidable factions were armed for a conflict against each other. The heads of each party aimed at the ascendency, and there was no regal power to intervene between them, or to check their ambition, and the appointment of a regency during the king's minority, which was to supply this want, might possibly lead to a reconciliation between the two parties. Even before the king's death, Catherine had been appealed to by both factions, and earnestly entreated to adopt the most opposite measures. The Guises and their adherents, who relied upon the assistance of the States-General—most of whom had been won over to their cause—and were supported by the whole Catholic party, urged her to allow the sentence of death passed upon the Prince of Condé to be carried out, and thus, with a single blow, to crush the Bourbons, whose bold aspirations threatened to thwart their own. On the other hand, the Queen was entreated by Antoine of Navarre to use her power to save his brother's life, and thus become assured of the attachment of his whole party. It did not occur to either of the two factions to dispute the Queen-mother's claims to the regency. The unfavourable circumstances in which the Bourbon princes had suddenly been placed by the king's death, may have deterred them from making any effort to obtain the regency for themselves, as they might otherwise have done; they considered it advisable to keep silent, in order that the ambition of the Guises might not in any way receive encouragement from the doubts which they would have raised against Catherine's claims. And the Guises, likewise, did not think it wise to raise any opposition for fear of reminding the nation of the superior claims of the Bourbons. By their silent recognition of Catherine's claims, both parties mutually shut each other out from the competition, and each party hoped to be enabled the more readily to attain their own ambitious ends by means of the Queen's name.

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[1] Anquetil, I., p. 62.

Catherine, following the wise counsel of the Chancellor de l'Hopital, decided upon the politic course not to become the instrument of either party against the other, but to hold a well-devised position midway between them, and thus to remain master of them both. When delivering the Prince of Condé from the furious vengeance of his enemies she made the most of this important service to the King of Navarre, but at the same time assured the princes of Lorraine of her powerful support in the event of the Bourbons, under the new government, giving any signs of remembering the bad treatment they had experienced during the previous reigns. By means of this policy, Catherine found herself in full possession of the regency directly after the king's death, without meeting with opposition from any quarter, and even without any interference from the assembled States, who watched this important change without interfering. The first use Catherine made of her power was to favour the Bourbons, and thus to restore the equilibrium between the two parties. Condé was allowed to quit his prison under honourable conditions, and retired to one of his brother's estates to await the day of his final acquittal; the King of Navarre was appointed lieutenant-general of France, and thus obtained an important branch of the supreme power. The Guises retained their hopes for the future at least, for they maintained their position at court, and could offer the Queen powerful support against the ambition of the Bourbons.

A semblance of peace did now exist for a time, but much was still wanting to inspire an honest feeling of trust between those whose spirits had been so sorely wounded. Montmorency was expected to accomplish this; during the previous reign he had been kept at a distance by the despotism of the Guises, but the change in the government now brought him back to his old sphere of activity. Full of honest zeal to do what was best for his country, and faithful both to his king and to his religion, Montmorency was precisely the man to mediate between the Queen-regent and her minister, to vouch for their reconciliation, and to make the private interests of both subservient to the welfare of the state. Orleans was filled with soldiers—a means by which the Guises had terrified their opponents and overruled the assembly—and still exhibited traces of war when the Constable reached the town, but he at once dismissed the guards at the gates. "My lord and master," he said, "trusts henceforth to be able to travel all over his kingdom in perfect security without any body guard." Montmorency then addressed the young king, bending on one knee before him and kissing his hand, tears dropping upon it: "Do not fear anything, my liege, and do not allow yourself to be alarmed by the present disturbances. My life and the lives of all your good subjects will be devoted to protect your throne." And he kept his word well, for he placed the future government on a legal basis, and helped to define the limits of power between the Queen-mother and King of Navarre. The meeting of the States-General, which had been summoned for no other purpose than to entice the Bourbons into a trap, found nothing to do as soon as its object was thwarted, and was, therefore, closed after a theatrical display of some useless deliberations, but was to meet again in May of the same year. Prince Condé reappeared at court—acquitted of all the charges raised against him, and in the full glory of his former position—to triumph over his enemies. His party received a powerful support in the Constable. Every opportunity was now made use of to offend the old ministers, and it seemed as if all things were combining to bring about their downfall. In fact very little more would have sufficed to make the now dominant party oblige the Queen either to expel the Lorraine princes or to give up the regency.

The Queen's political shrewdness, it is true, upheld the Guises during this storm, for had she allowed the Bourbon faction to gain the complete upperhand, she would have had to fear the worst for her own safety, for the monarchy, and perhaps even for her religion. Still such weak and unreliable support could not have contented the Guises, and still less could their ambition have been satisfied with the subordinate part they were now called upon to play. They had, moreover, made some attempt to make themselves independent of the Queen's protection, and the over-hasty triumph of their adversaries could not fail to assist in strengthening their party. Their enemies, not content with having driven them from the helm of government, now laid hands upon their possessions, and demanded an account of the gifts and pensions which the Lorraine princes and their adherents had contrived to obtain during the preceding reigns. This affected not only the Guises themselves, but the Duchess of Valentinois, the Marshal St. André, a favourite of Henry II., and unfortunately, even the Constable Montmorency, who had taken every advantage of Henry's generosity, and was, moreover, related to the family of the Duchess, by the marriage of his son. Religious zeal was the one weakness, and avarice the one vice which sullied Montmorency's virtues, and which exposed him to the treacherous intrigues of the Guises. The latter, together with the Marshal and the Duchess, who were all united by a common interest, made use of the circumstance to draw the Constable over to their party; and they managed to accomplish their wish by arousing in him the double stimulus of avarice and religious zeal. With crafty dissimulation they represented the attack of the Calvinists upon their possessions as a step aimed at overthrowing the Catholic Church, and the deluded old man was the more readily caught in the trap, as his displeasure had already been excited by the favour publicly bestowed upon the Calvinists by the Queen-Regent. These actions of Queen Catherine's, which were so little in accordance with her own sentiments, had been provoked by the Guises themselves, owing to their suspicious relations with Philip II. of Spain. This formidable neighbour, whose insatiable ambition and desire for conquest made him look greedily at other countries, while he could scarcely maintain his own possessions—had long since riveted his attention upon the internal affairs of France, watched the storms that had shaken it with feelings of pleasure, and encouraged the hatred betwen the two factions by agents paid to further his own schemes. Under the title of Protector he, in fact, domineered over France. A Spanish ambassador in Paris instructed the Catholics what attitude they were to assume towards their adversaries, he rejected or sanctioned their ordinances, according as these corresponded with his sovereign's own schemes, in fact, publicly and unhesitatingly played the part of one of the ministers. The princes of Lorraine kept upon the most intimate terms with him, and no important resolution was adopted unless it had been previously sanctioned by the Spanish court. As soon as the league between the Guises, the Marshal of St. André, and Montmorency—known by the name of the *Triumvirate*—had been formed, they acknowledged the King of Spain as their chief, and he was to support them with an army in case of need, this, at least, is one of the charges brought against them. Hence, owing to an understanding between two otherwise hostile factions, a new and formidable power, supported by the whole Catholic party, arose in the kingdom, and threatened to endanger the equilibrium which Catherine had endeavoured to maintain between the two religious factions. The Queen therefore resorted to her usual device, to negotiation, with a view to keeping some of the malcontents, at all events, under her control. All the disputes between the parties were usually represented as connected with religion, for it was religion that bound the Catholics of the kingdom to the Guises, and the Reformers to the Bourbons. The ascendency which the Triumvirate seemed to be acquiring, threatened the Reformers with a new species of oppression, and their insubordination again threatened to throw all France into a state of civil war; indeed several small conflicts between the two religious factions, several disturbances in the capital as well as in the provinces, already announced its approach. Catherine did all in her power to check the outbursting flames, and one result of her continued efforts was that an edict was at last issued, which relieved the Reformers from the dread of having to pay the penalty of death for holding their religious convictions; but still they were forbidden to meet in public for worship or any other pretext, although they had urgently prayed for this permission. The Reformers, it is true, gained but little by this edict, still their dreaded outburst of despair was, at all events, checked for a time, and an apparent reconciliation was effected between the leaders of the two parties at court; this only proved how little the leaders of the Huguenots cared about the fate of their co-religionists, although the subject was perpetually on their lips. What caused most trouble was the attempt made to arrange matters between the Prince of Condé and the Duke of Guise, and the king himself was directed to use his influence. When it had been settled what words, attitude, and actions were to be employed, the comedy was begun in the king's presence: "Let us hear," said the king to the Duke of Guise, "what actually happened at Orleans." And thereupon the Duke gave such an artful account of the proceedings taken against the Prince, that he himself seemed to have had no participation whatever in the matter, and the whole blame was laid to the account of the late monarch.—"Whoever it may have been that cast the insult upon me," replied Condé, turning to the Duke, "I call him a base villain."—"And so do I," replied the Duke, "but that in no way affects me."

The regency of Queen Catherine was a period of negotiations. What could not be effected by this means, was to be settled by the Council at Pontoise and the Colloquy at Poissy; both meetings were summoned with a view to adjust the nation's political differences, and to endeavour to bring about a mutual understanding between the two religious factions. The General Council at Pontoise was but a continuation of the meeting of the States-General at Orleans which had closed without accomplishing anything, and had been prorogued to May of this same year, 1561. This meeting, too, is remarkable only on account of a violent attack on the clergy, who came to the determination rather to offer gifts (*Don gratuit*) than to be deprived of a third part of their estates.

The friendly theological conference which was held at Poissy, a little town not far from St. Germains, between the doctors of the three churches, aroused expectations that proved equally futile. In France as well as in Germany a General Council had, for some time past, met occasionally to settle differences in church matters, for extirpating errors and abuses, improving the morality of the clergy, and settling disputed dogmas. This Council had, in fact, been summoned to meet at Trent in 1542, and met for several years, but without fulfilling the expectations entertained of it, and in 1552 the meetings had to be suspended owing to disturbances in Germany. No Pope could be induced, after that, to sanction a meeting of the Council again, although it was a general wish that one should be held; at last, however, the extreme misery brought upon the European nations by the continued religious disputes, made France, more especially, resolve to insist upon a Council being held, and to compel the reigning Pope, Pius IV., by threats, to give his consent. The Pope's hesitation had meanwhile inspired the French ministry with the idea of bringing about some agreement, by means of an amicable discussion on the disputed points, between the leading prelates of the three religions, and to set forth the power of truth by a refutation of the heretical doctrines. One main object, at the same time, was to make use of the opportunity for showing the great difference that existed between Lutheranism and Calvinism, and by this means, to induce the German

Lutherans to withdraw their support from the Calvinists, as it was through the Lutherans that the Calvinists had become such a formidable party. This is said to have been the main reason why the Cardinal of Lorraine strongly favoured the project of the Colloquy, still he meant, at the same time, to make use of the opportunity for displaying his own theological knowledge and oratorical skill. In order that the triumph of the true Church over the false doctrines might be made as brilliant as possible, the meetings were to be open to the public. The Queen-Regent came to open the Colloquy accompanied by her son, the princes of the blood, the ministers of state, and all the great officers of the crown. Five cardinals, forty bishops, several doctors, among whom Claude D. Espensa was distinguished for his learning and critical acumen, represented the Romish Church; twelve eminent theologians had been selected to speak for the Protestant cause. The most distinguished of these was Theodore Beza, a preacher from Geneva, a man as quick in mind as he was fiery of speech, a powerful speaker and formidable dialectician, and the ablest disputant in the assembly.

When invited to give an exposition of the doctrines of his party, Beza proceeded to the centre of the hall, knelt down and offered up a prayer with uplifted hands. He thereupon explained the doctrinal system of his party, giving as many of the fundamental reasons as could be done in the short time at his disposal, and ended by making a touching allusion to the cruel manner in which his co-religionists had hitherto been treated in France. All this had been listened to in silence; but when he came to deny the real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper, a murmur of indignation ran round the assembly. When Beza had ended, the question passed from person to person was, whether Beza should be favoured with an answer, and the Cardinal of Lorraine had some little difficulty in obtaining the permission of the bishops to offer a reply. At last, however, he rose, and in a speech full of art and eloquence refuted his adversary's principal arguments, especially those which had attacked the authority of the church and the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Supper. Regret was already felt that the young king should have been present at a conference where the most sacred dogmas of the church had been treated with so much freedom. As soon, therefore, as the Cardinal had finished his oration, the bishops all rose, gathered round the king and exclaimed: "Sire, this is the true faith! These are the pure doctrines of the church! These we are ready to seal with our blood."

At the next meeting, which it had been considered advisable the king should not attend, the other disputed points were taken up in succession, and the doctrines of the Holy Supper were especially brought forward again in order to compel the Geneva preacher to give his actual and decided opinion on the subject. Now, as the Lutheran dogmas on this point differed even more from those of the other Reformers than from the doctrines of the Catholic church, it was hoped that the two Protestant communities might thereby be brought into collision. But what had been a serious debate so far, setting forth the convictions of both parties, now became a mere skilful bandying of words, where the practices and devices of a fencer were preferred to the weapons of reason. The dispute was finally referred to a select body of five doctors, whose deliberations proved equally futile, and the different parties left the assembly all imagining that they had gained their end.

Accordingly this conference in France did not fulfil the expectations entertained of it, any better than a similar one held in Germany, and the old political intrigues which had hitherto proved more effectual were again resorted to. The Court of Rome, by means of its legates, proved itself specially active in developing the power of the Triumvirate, for the welfare of the Catholic church seemed now to depend upon it. With this object in view, it was determined to make an effort to win over the King of Navarre, by withdrawing his interest in the Reformers; this was a plan that promised well, owing to the Prince's irresolute character. Antoine of Navarre, who is remembered more through his famous son Henry IV. than for any actions of his own, showed himself the father of the great Henry only in his gallantries and his military valour. Uncertain and without independence, like his little kingdom between its two formidable neighbours, Antoine's faint-hearted policy vacillated and wavered from one party to another, his religious sentiments from one church to another, and his character between vice and virtue. Throughout life a toy to the passions of other men, he followed a treacherous phantom which the craftiness of his rivals contrived to hold up before him, and was always deluded in his hopes. Spain, supported by Papal intrigues, had snatched a considerable portion of this little kingdom from the House of Navarre, and as Philip II. was not likely to make good an act of injustice which proved of use to himself, he retained possession of the land which his ancestors had robbed from its rightful owner. Antoine of Navarre had no means wherewith to oppose this formidable foe, except the weapons used by the weak. He would flatter himself at one time of being able, by pliant complacency, to obtain from his adversary's sense of fairness and generosity what he felt he could not obtain by an attitude of defiance, owing to his fear of him; at other times, when this hope proved vain, he would seek protection from France, and trust that with this help he might regain possession of his property. When deceived in both expectations he would, in the indignation of his heart, take up the Protestant cause, which, however, he showed no hesitation in renouncing when there was a ray of hope that his object could be better accomplished by joining the other party. A slave to his selfish and faint-hearted policy, changeable in his resolutions as well as in his hopes, he never wholly belonged to the party whose name he bore, and never earned, even with his blood, the gratitude of either party, because, in fact, he shed it for both.

It was to this Prince that the Guises now directed their attention in order to strengthen the power of the Triumvirate, by inducing him to join it. To promise to restore Navarre to him was, however, too well-worn a device to make any further impression upon the man who had so often been deceived. The Guises, therefore, contrived a new plan, which, although as meaningless as the other, proved most successful in effecting the purpose of its originators, After failing to delude this distrustful Prince by offering to arrange a marriage between him and the widowed Queen, Mary Stuart, and thus giving him a prospect to the thrones of Scotland and England, Philip II. of Spain was induced to give him the island of Sardinia by way of compensation for the portion of Navarre that had been taken from him. At the same time everything was done to excite Antoine's desire to obtain Sardinia, by giving him the most glowing accounts of the advantages to be derived from the possession of the island. He was reminded of the not very remote prospects to the French throne which would be his, in the event of the ruling dynasty coming to an end with the weakly sons of Henry II., a prospect from which he would inevitably be excluded, if he continued to favour the Protestant cause. His vanity too was excited with the thought, that although he were to sacrifice all these great advantages he would never be able to play a leading part with the faction over which the genius of Condé held unlimited control. These urgent representations of the Guises necessarily soon exercised their influence upon the weak mind of the King of Navarre. And accordingly, rather than play a second part among the Reformed party, he unconditionally went over to the Catholics and played a much less important part with that party; and rather than have a rival in the Prince of Condé, he took the Duke of Guise as his lord and master. The orange-groves of Sardinia—amid the shades of which Antoine was already picturing to himself a life as in paradise—perfectly captivated his imagination, and he blindly fell into the snare prepared for him. Queen Catherine was even forsaken by him, that he might devote himself wholly to the Triumvirate; and the Reformers thus beheld the friend who had never been of much use to them, become an undisguised enemy, who did them even less harm.

The Queen-Mother had brought about a semblance of peace between the leaders of the religious factions, but not between the parties themselves, who continued to persecute each other with the most inveterate hatred.

Each party—where it happened to be the stronger—oppressed or annoyed the other, and the leaders of both parties, without interfering themselves, watched their proceedings with satisfaction, as long as the zeal on either side showed no signs of abating and the party-spirit was kept active. Although the last edict of Queen Catherine prohibited the Reformers from assembling anywhere in public, the prohibition was disregarded wherever the party felt itself strong enough to show a spirit of defiance. In Paris as well as in the provincial towns—in spite of the edict—sermons were preached to public assemblies, and the efforts made to interrupt the proceedings were invariably unsuccessful. The Queen observed this state of anarchy with fear; she foresaw that this warfare on a small scale, was but the sharpening of weapons for a greater struggle. Hence the diplomatic and patient Chancellor de l'Hopital, the Queen's chief adviser, had no great difficulty in persuading her to withdraw the edict which, by not being enforced, only tended to weaken the power of the law, rendered the Reformers familiar with disobedience and antagonism, and encouraged an unfortunate spirit of persecution between the two parties, as the Catholics naturally endeavoured to see that the edict was not disregarded. Upon the recommendation of this wise patriot, the Queen-Regent summoned a committee drawn from all the different parliaments, to meet at St. Germains to determine: "what plan to adopt for the good of the state, with regard to the Reformers and their public meetings (apart altogether from the worth or worthlessness of their doctrines)." The answer was contained in the question itself, and the result of the conference was the publication of an edict greatly benefiting the Reformers. It granted them formal permission to meet for religious services, provided that these meetings were held outside the walls of the different towns and that the congregations were unarmed; indeed the magistrates were called upon to protect these meetings. On the other hand the Reformers were called upon to restore to the Catholics all the churches and church properties which they had unlawfully taken possession of, to pay the dues to the Catholic clergy, like the Catholics themselves, to observe the feasts and holidays of the church, and the degree of relationship in marriages prescribed by the dominant church. It was not without great opposition that the Paris parliament registered this edict of 1562, known by the name of the edict of Jenner after the place where it was first proclaimed; it created as much indignation among the strict Catholics and the Spanish party as it created triumphant joy among the Reformers. To the latter it seemed that this edict would set a check upon the malicious intentions of their adversaries, and that their own doctrines had made an important step towards obtaining a lawful existence in the kingdom. Even the Queen-Regent flattered herself that she had now placed an insurmountable barrier between the two religious factions, applied a wholesome check upon the ambition of the nobles, and destroyed the smouldering fire of civil war for some time to come. And yet it was this edict of pacification—owing to its being infringed—that aroused the Protestants to the most violent determinations, and brought about the war which it was intended to prevent.

This edict of Jenner in 1562, accordingly, did not in any way fulfil the expectations of its promoters, or keep the two religious factions within the bounds of order; it only encouraged the enemies of all order to devise deeper and more mischievous plots. The favours which this edict conferred upon the Reformers, and the important preferences which their leaders, Condé and the Chatillons enjoyed at the hands of the Queen, deeply aggrieved the bigoted mind and the ambition of old Montmorency, the Guises and the Spanish party. The leaders of the two parties all watched one another in silence but not inactively, and seemed only awaiting the moment that would prove favourable for the outbreak of their curbed passions. Both factions, although firmly determined to meet hostilities with hostility, carefully avoided being the first to begin, so as not to appear the guilty party in the eyes of Europe. An accident at last furnished what the two parties both wished and feared to the same extent.

The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine had for some time withdrawn themselves from the Queen-Regent's court and retired to the German frontier, where they could more readily prevent the dreaded entry of the German Protestants into France. But the Catholic party soon began to miss its leaders, and the continued favours which the Reformers received from the Queen, rendered their return imperative. The Duke, therefore, set out for Paris with a large retinue, which increased as he proceeded on his way. He had to pass through Vassy on the borders of Champagne, where the Reformers happened to be holding a meeting. The Duke's men, as arrogant as their chief, got into dispute with the enthusiastic crowd, and the encounter ended in a fierce brawl; amid the disorderly struggle that ensued, the Duke, who had hurried to the scene to check the combatants, was himself wounded in the face by a stone thrown at him. The sight of blood on their leader's face infuriated the soldiers still more, and they, thereupon, attacked the unarmed congregation like a set of wild animals, killing whoever came in their way, regardless of sex or age, and abused all the ecclesiastical vessels they obtained possession of in the most disgraceful manner. The whole Reformed party in France were roused by these acts of violence, and the fiercest complaints were addressed to the Queen-Regent through the Prince of Condé, who also presented a petition in his own name. Catherine did all in her power to preserve peace, and as she felt that by pacifying the leaders, the parties themselves would become more manageable, she urgently entreated the Duke of Guise—who was at Monceaux at the time—to repair to court, where she hoped to settle the differences between him and the Prince of Condé.

However her efforts proved vain. The Duke was bold enough to disregard her summons, and proceeded on his way to Paris, where, accompanied by a numerous retinue, and received with tumultuous joy by a large crowd, he made a triumphal entry. Condé, who had reached Paris shortly before, made a vain endeavour to win the populace over to his side. The fanatical Parisians saw in him only the Huguenot, whom they detested, and in the

Duke only the glorious defender of their church. The Prince had to retire and to leave the field in possession of the victor. All now depended upon which of the two factions outrivalled the other in quickness, in power and in daring. While the Prince, in all haste, collected troops at Meaux, to which place he had escaped, and joined the Chatillons to set the Triumvirate at defiance, the latter had already set out for Fontainebleau with a large body of horse, in order to gain possession of the young king's person, and thus make it appear as if their adversaries were rebelling against the monarch.

The Queen-Regent was seized with terror and dismay upon hearing of the Duke's entry into Paris, and foresaw her own downfall in his increase of power. The equilibrium which had hitherto been maintained between the two hostile factions, and which alone had enabled her to rule hitherto, was being lost, and the only means of restoring the balance was to give her public support to the Reformers. Her fear of falling into the tyrannical power of the Guises and their adherents, her fear for the king's life as well as her own, overcame every other consideration. Hence, she no longer heeded the ambition of the Protestant leaders which she had formerly so much dreaded, but endeavoured only to protect herself from the ambition of the Guises. The power of the Protestants, which alone could afford her this protection, was offered to her in her first perplexity, and the danger that threatened her, silenced every untoward consideration. Gladly she accepted the assistance proffered by the Reformers, and the Prince of Condé was urgently entreated to protect both son and mother whatever the consequences of this step might be. And in order not to be surprised by her enemies, Catherine fled with the king to Melun and thence on to Fontainebleau; this precaution was, however, frustrated by the active measures taken by the Triumvirate.

They took possession of the king forthwith, and the mother was left free either to accompany him, or to remain in any place she might choose. Before she had time to come to any decision, the party started, and she had to submit to be carried off likewise. Horrors met her eyes at every turn, and danger on every side. She finally decided upon facing the known danger, in order not to be entrapped in the greater troubles of an unknown danger, and, accordingly, determined to follow the fortunes of the Guises. The king was carried in triumph to Paris, where his presence was the signal for the Catholics, in their fanatical zeal, taking every liberty with the Reformers. All their places of meeting were attacked by a furious mob, the doors burst open, pulpits and pews were smashed to pieces or burnt to ashes. It was Montmorency, the venerable field-marshal of France, who performed these heroic deeds! But this ludicrous battle was the prelude to warfare that proved all the more serious.

It was only by a few hours that the Prince of Condé had missed the king at Fontainebleau. In accordance with the Queen-Regent's wish, he had started at once with a large retinue to take her and her son under his protection, but he arrived only in time to learn that the hostile party had been beforehand with him, and that the important moment had been lost. This piece of misfortune, however, did not discourage him. "Having got thus far," he said to Admiral Coligny, "we must either wade through or sink." He hastened with his troops to Orleans, which town he reached just in time to help Colonel d'Andelot, who was fighting the Catholics there at a great disadvantage, to gain a victory. Condé determined to make this city his head-quarters, to collect his party there, and to hold it as a place of refuge for his family and himself in case of misfortune.

The war now began on both sides with manifestoes and counter-manifestoes, which were full of the bitterness of party hatred, and altogether wanting in anything like straightforwardness. The Prince of Condé in his, appealed to all honest-minded Frenchmen to assist him in liberating their king and their king's mother from the state of captivity in which they were held by the Guises and their adherents. The Guises, on the other hand, endeavoured to prove the justice of their cause by the fact that the king's person was in their hands, and appealed to all loyal Frenchmen to gather round the king's banner. The youthful monarch was himself made to declare before his Council of State that he as well as his mother were perfectly free, and he was also obliged to confirm the edict of Jenner. The same misrepresentations were adopted by both parties towards the foreign powers. With a view to deceiving the German Protestants, the Guises declared that the dispute was in no way connected with religious concerns, and that the hostilities were directed only against the rebels. The same device was employed by the Prince of Condé for the purpose of preventing the Catholics of other countries taking any interest in his adversaries. Amid this rivalry in dissimulation Queen Catherine proved herself true to her character and to her policy by playing a double part, and owing to the force of circumstances, contrived with consummate skill to act the most opposite parts. She publicly denied having made any agreements with the Prince of Condé, and strongly urged him to keep peace; whereas, it is said, she was secretly favouring his wishes and encouraging him to stir up the war. The Duke of Guise's orders to the governors of the provinces commanded them to destroy all and everything that belonged to the Reformers, whereas the letters from the Queen contained the very reverse orders, that the Reformers should be treated with leniency.

While these political measures were being employed, the main object, the war itself, was not lost sight of, and the seeming endeavours to preserve peace, merely gave the Prince of Condé more time to put his party in a state of defence. He appealed to all the reformed communities to take part in a war which so intimately concerned themselves, and to assist in raising the money necessary for carrying it on, and their religious zeal placed their funds at his disposal. His appeals found energetic support, a brave and faithful body of the nobility took up arms in his favour; a formal act was drawn up to unite the dispersed sectarians in one league, and to determine the object of the confederation. The act declared that they had taken up arms to protect the laws of the kingdom, the authority and the very person of the king against the outrageous intrigues of certain ambitious persons who were plunging the realm into a state of utter confusion. The confederation pledged themselves by a solemn oath to do their utmost to put down all blasphemies, all religious abuses, superstitious doctrines and customs, all excesses, &c., this, in fact, was much the same thing as formally declaring war against the Catholics. Finally, the Prince of Condé was proclaimed head of the whole league, and the confederates vowed to devote their blood and possessions to the cause, and to serve their leader with implicit obedience. The rebellion now assumed a more definite form, the separate undertakings also showed more connection with the main object, and the party, in fact, became for the first time one organised body animated by a thoughtful mind. Catholics and Reformers had, it is true, long before this met in several small encounters; several of the nobles in various provinces had taken up arms, collected soldiers, taken towns by surprise, devastated the country, and fought small battles; but these several operations, great as was the misery produced in the various districts where the encounters had taken place, had not accomplished anything for the cause as a whole, and there was no important town or actual army that could offer protection to troops retreating after a defeat.

The whole kingdom was now being armed, at one place for attack, at another for defence; and the principal towns in Normandy and Rouen, in particular, declared themselves in favour of the Reformers. A terrible spirit of discord, which dissolved even the most sacred bonds of nature and of society, spread all over the country. Plunder, assassination, and murderous encounters marked each day; the terrible sight of smouldering towns proclaimed the wide-spread misery. Brothers separated from brothers, fathers from sons, friends from friends, to join the different leaders, and met again under the awful circumstances of seeing their fellow-citizens fall amid a fearful slaughter. Meanwhile, a regular army had assembled at Orleans under the Prince of Condé, another at Paris under the command of the Constable Montmorency and the Guises, both equally impatient to decide the momentous question as to the fate of their country and its religion.

Before any decisive step was taken, Catherine again made an attempt to mediate between the two hostile parties; she dreaded the issue of a war that threatened to check her power whichever faction might prove successful. At her suggestion the leaders met in person at Toury to come to some understanding; but as nothing was accomplished at this meeting, another interview was held at Talsy between Chateaudun and Orleans. The Prince of Condé insisted upon the withdrawal of the Duke of Guise, of the Marshal St. Andre, and of the Constable; and the Queen, secured thus much from the latter, that during the conference they had retired some miles from the royal camp. When the main causes of mistrust had thus been removed, this crafty princess—whose only object was to free herself from the tyranny of the one or other party—contrived with consummate cunning, through one of her agents, the Bishop of Valence, to induce the Prince of Condé to offer to quit the kingdom with all his adherents on condition that his adversaries would do likewise. The Queen immediately took him at his word, and was on the point of triumphing over his thoughtlessness, when the general discontent of the Protestant army and a maturer consideration of his over-hasty step, made the Prince determine speedily to put an end to the conference, and to meet the Queen's treachery with treachery. Thus ended the last attempt at an amicable settlement of the dispute, and the decision now rested solely with the sword.

Historians have inexhaustible material for their descriptions of the horrors which characterise this war. A single glance at human nature and at history will suffice to account for all the atrocious cruelties. It is not any new observation that there are no wars carried on in so dishonourable a spirit and in so inhuman a manner, as those which have been ignited in a country by fanaticism and party hatred. Passions, which have shown their force, by destroying all the human sentiments otherwise held the most sacred, which have cut asunder the honourable relation between the sovereign and his subjects, and even the stronger claims of natural ties, are no longer controlled by any feelings of humanity; and the force which has burst those strong bonds, carries men headlong and irresistibly into every extreme. The sentiments of injustice, of uprightness and of trust, which are based upon a recognised equality of right, lose their power in civil wars, where every individual seems a criminal to the other, and takes the law into his own hands. When one nation makes war upon another, it is only the will of the ruler that arms the people, only their sense of honour that acts as a spur to their bravery, in which case their bravery is felt to be sacred even in face of the enemy, and a noble form of bravery even spares its foe. But in civil wars the object of the soldier's hatred makes no call upon his feelings of bravery, a very different passion guides his hand in the fight. In civil wars the passions of the nation take an active part in the struggle, and the enemy is the object of their passion. Each individual is looked upon as an *offender*, because each individual is known to have joined the hostile party of his *own free will.* Each individual is likewise the *offended party*, inasmuch as what he values is despised, what he holds dear is attacked, and what he has preferred is condemned. In civil wars, when passion and necessity force the sword into the hands of the peaceful husbandman, of the artisan, and the artist, bitterness and fury alone supply the want of a knowledge of the science of war, desperation alone supplies the place of true valour. In civil wars, where hearth and home, and family and possessions have had to be forsaken, men will find malicious pleasure in throwing a firebrand into the homes of others, and will pay no heed to the voice of conscience from strange lips, which voice spoke in vain to them from their own homes. In civil wars, also, where the springs whence the common people draw their morality, have become clouded, where all that is held in honour is reviled, where what is regarded as sacred is profaned, where what seemed Unchangeable is moved out of its groove, where the vital organs of universal order show signs of disease, the mischievous example set by the whole, affects every individual heart, and every breast is stirred by the storm which shakes the foundation of the state. Trebly terrible is the case, where religious frenzy becomes associated with party-hatred, and the torch of civil war is ignited by the impure flame of priestly fanaticism.

This was the character of the war which was now devastating France. And it was from the lap of the Reformed church that the dark spirit of cruelty was started on its unhappy course to cause all the horrors. In the Reformers' camp there was nothing cheerful, nothing joyous; all games, all songs of mirth had been banished from their midst by their own stern zeal. Psalms and prayers were to be heard on every side, and their preachers were constantly engaged in instructing the soldiers in their duties towards their religion, and in stirring up their fanatical zeal. A religion which expected such sacrifices from every species of sensuous enjoyment, could not have aroused in its followers any spirit of humanity, the character of the whole party was necessarily deteriorated by this gloomy and servile creed. Any trace of Papacy put the religious fervour of the Calvinists into a state of frenzy; altars, and human beings without distinction, were sacrificed to their intolerant pride. What fanaticism alone did not urge them to do, necessity and want drove them to accomplish. The Prince of Condé set the example by an act of pillage which was soon repeated all over the kingdom. Having no longer any access to the funds wherewith he had hitherto defrayed the expenses of the war, he seized the properties of the Catholic churches, wherever he could lay hands upon them, and had the holy vessels melted down. The wealth of the churches was too great a temptation for the greed of the Protestants, and the profanation of the sacred objects was too sweet a pleasure to their spirit of vengeance, to be resisted. All the churches they could get possession of, and especially the monasteries, became the prey to their avarice as well as of their religious fanaticism. And not satisfied with plunder alone, they treated all the sacred relics belonging to their enemies with the utmost irreverence; with intentional cruelty and savage maliciousness they did all they could to profane the objects of their veneration. They tore down the churches, demolished the altars, destroyed the pictures of saints, trampled upon the sacred relics, or dishonoured them by putting them to the meanest of uses; they even opened the graves and made the dead suffer for the faith of the living. No wonder that such outrageous insults roused the hostile party to the most fearful acts of retribution, that all the Catholic pulpits poured forth maledictions upon the ruthless violators of their faith, that the Huguenots who fell into the hands of the Papists met with no mercy, and that atrocities committed against the supposed godhead were avenged by atrocities against nature and humanity!

The leaders set the example in these outrageous acts; but the excesses which the rabble on both sides were thus led to commit, soon caused the leaders to repent their own precipitate rashness. For each party now tried to outdo the other in inventive cruelty. Not content with revenge paid in blood, they tried to make the most of their fearful pleasure by new devices of torture. Human life had become a sport, and the contemptuous laugh of the murderer only increased the horrors of an excruciating death. No sanctuary, no solemn promise, no civil or national rights, were any protection against blind, ferocious passions. Fidelity and trust seemed to have ceased to exist, and vows were made only to entrap the victims. A decree of the Paris parliament, which formally and solemnly denounced the Reformed doctrines, doomed all their adherents to death, while another and more impressive condemnation, which proceeded from the king's council, proclaimed all adherents of the Prince of Condé and the Prince himself outlaws, as offender's against the king's majesty; such procedure could not have had much effect in appeasing the embittered minds of the party; for henceforth the king's name and the sure prospect of plunder only fired the Papist's thirst for persecution, while the Huguenot's courage was stimulated by feelings of desperation.

CIVIL WARS IN FRANCE FROM 1562 TO 1569.

It was in vain that Catherine de Medicis employed all the devices of her policy to appease the fury of the two factions, in vain that a decree of the Council proclaimed all the followers of the Prince of Condé rebels and traitors, in vain that the Paris parliament denounced the Calvinists. Yet great as was the confidence which the latter felt in their strength, the result in no way corresponded with the anticipations raised by their preparations. The reformed portion of the nobility, who formed the main strength of Condé's army, had soon run through the whole of its small resources, and as nothing decisive occurred, and the war was being protracted, and they were unable to meet the expenses themselves, these nobles gave way to the urgent demands of their own self-love which called upon them to defend their own homes. Accordingly this army, of which such great things had been expected, was broken up after a time, and Condé, now much too weak to meet a superior enemy in the field, had no alternative but to withdraw to Orleans with the remainder of his troops.

Condé there awaited the assistance which some of the foreign Protestant powers had promised him. Germany and Switzerland were, to both of the hostile parties, storehouses of soldiery, and their cheap bravery, wholly indifferent as to the cause for which they were expected to fight, was at the disposal of the highest bidder. German as well as Swiss mercenaries would fight under different flags just as their own or their leader's interest might require, and religious considerations were but little taken into account. And while a German army was being raised for the Prince on the banks of the Rhine, important negotiations were also being made with Queen Elizabeth of England. The same policy which induced this queen, at a later day, to act as the protectress of the Netherlands against their oppressor King Philip of Spain, and led her to take the newly developing state under her care, made her now consider it her duty to offer her support to the

French Protestants; besides the great cause of religion would not allow her to watch the downfall of her co-religionists in a neighbouring country, without making an effort on their behalf. These calls upon her conscience were not a little strengthened by political considerations. A civil war in France would secure her own still tottering throne from an attack from that quarter, and at the same time would furnish her with a welcome opportunity for extending her own possessions at the expense of France. The loss of Calais was still an open grievance to the English; with the loss of that important town, England had lost her free passage into France. To make good this loss, and also to regain a footing in that kingdom, had long been part of Elizabeth's policy, and the civil war which was now blazing up, offered a means by which her wish might be accomplished. Six thousand English troops were granted to Condé, on condition that one half of these should garrison the town of Havre-de-Grace, the other half the towns of Rouen and Dieppe in Normandy, as places of refuge for their persecuted co-religionists. Hence a violent party-spirit annulled for a time all the patriotic feelings of the French Protestants, and the national hatred towards the British nation, which had endured for many years, gave way at a moment's notice in view of the more implacable hatred between the two religious sects and their spirit of persecution.

The dreaded approach of the English into Normandy, drew the royal army to that province, and the town of Rouen was besieged. The parliament and all the more distinguished citizens had previously fled from the town, and its defence was left to a fanatical crowd, which, under the excitement of vehement harangues, heeded nothing but their own blind religious zeal and the law of desperation. But notwithstanding all the resistance offered by the citizens, after the town had held out a month, the walls were taken by storm, and its defenders were punished for their obstinate resistance by most barbarous treatment; this, however, was fully avenged not long afterwards by the Protestants at Orleans. The death of the King of Navarre from a wound received during one of the attacks, has made the siege of Rouen in 1562 memorable, but not exactly famous; for his death was equally unimportant to both of the contending factions.

The loss of Rouen and the victorious advance of the hostile army through Normandy, threatened to prove the ruin of the Prince of Condé, who had now only a few of the larger towns under his control; however, the timely arrival of German mercenaries, whom one of his generals, Andelot, had succeeded in joining after indescribable difficulties, again revived his hopes. At the head of these troops, which, together with his own forces, constituted a formidable army, he felt himself sufficiently powerful to march on to Paris, and to terrify the city by his unexpected arrival with an armed force. Had it not been for the political sagacity of Catherine, Paris would, on this occasion, either have been captured, or, at all events, the Protestants would have succeeded in securing peace on advantageous terms. Catherine, by means of her usual device, negotiations, contrived to check the Prince midway in his undertaking, and gained time to save herself by holding out to him the hope of a treaty on favourable terms. She promised to confirm the edict of Jenner, which granted the Protestants the right to hold religious services, provided these were not held in towns where the Supreme Courts of Justice were holding their meetings. As the Prince persisted in demanding that this religious tolerance should be extended also to such towns where the courts happened to be sitting, the discussions were protracted, and Catherine thus obtained time for taking her necessary measures. The cessation of hostilities which she cunningly managed to arrange with the Prince during these deliberations, proved ruinous to the confederates; for while the royalists were acquiring new strength within the walls of Paris, and Spanish mercenaries were coming to their assistance from without, the Prince's army was daily diminishing, owing to desertions and the severity of the weather, and he was, accordingly, obliged before long to make a rapid retreat. He marched back into Normandy, where he expected to receive money and troops from England, but found himself, at Dreux, confronted by Queen Catherine's army, and forced to engage in a decisive battle. The two armies met and stood irresolute and dismayed, before the cannons gave the signal of death; it was as if Nature were for a moment re-asserting her rights, as if the thought that the blood of brothers and of fellow-citizens was about to be shed, produced a momentary feeling of horror in the minds of every individual soldier. But this struggle of conscience did not last long, the savage shout of discord soon drowned the low voice of conscience. All the more furious was the storm that succeeded this ominous calm. For seven terrible hours the two parties fought, with equally ferocious courage, and equally inveterate hatred. The victory seemed to waver from one side to the other, till at length the Duke of Guise obtained it for the king's party. The Prince of Condé was taken prisoner by the royalists, and Montmorency fell into the hands of the confederates. The royalists also lost Marshal St. André among their slain. The battle was won by the Duke of Guise, and this decisive victory freed him from a formidable public enemy, and from two rivals.

If Catherine felt indignant at the dependent position she had to occupy under the Triumvirate, she must now have doubly felt the Duke's absolute power, for his ambition knew no bounds, and his domineering arrogance no moderation. The victory at Dreux had not in any way furthered her wishes, but had given her a master who did not long delay in making use of the supremacy he had acquired, and soon employed the determined and proud language of a ruler. He had everything at his disposal, and the unlimited power he possessed furnished him with the means of purchasing friends, and of filling the court as well as the army with his creatures. Although Catherine's own policy would have led her to offer her assistance to the vanquished Protestants, and to check the arrogance of the Duke of Guise by reinstating the Prince of Condé, she was obliged to adopt other measures, owing to the Duke's superior influence. The Duke followed up his victory and moved on towards Orleans, in order to take this city, which was the head-quarters of the Protestants, and hoped thus to crush the party entirely. The loss of the battle at Dreux and the capture of their leader had, indeed, greatly shaken the courage of the confederates, but had not altogether crushed their spirit. They were now headed by Admiral Coligny, whose inventive and unwearied genius was never more brilliant than when grappling with difficulties. He collected the remains of the defeated army under his standard and, what was more important, gave it a leader in his own person. Reinforced by English troops, and assisted with English money, he led his men to Normandy, with the intention of making small skirmishes to strengthen himself for greater enterprises.

Meanwhile Francis of Guise continued to harass Orleans, with a view to capturing the town, and thus crowning his previous triumph. Andelot, with the nucleus of the confederate army, and the ablest of its officers, had withdrawn to Orleans, and it was there likewise that the Constable was imprisoned. The capture of such an important town would have at once brought the war to an end, and hence the Duke spared himself no trouble to get possession of it. But in place of obtaining at its walls the laurels he had hoped for, his greatness found its limit there. An assassin, Jean Poltrot de Méré, fired a pistol at him loaded with poisoned shot and wounded him mortally ; this bloody act was the beginning of the tragedy which fanaticism subsequently so terribly developed in a series of similar atrocities. By the death of the Duke of Guise the Calvinists were unquestionably relieved of a formidable opponent, and Queen Catherine of a dangerous participator in her power ; but France lost in him both a hero and a great man. For, however unbounded the pretensions of this prince may have been, still he was certainly the man for his undertakings ; and however many the storms his ambition may have aroused in the state, still—as even his enemies admit—his ambition was not wanting in that loftiness of sentiment which ennobles the passions of all great minds. How sacred to him was the duty of honour—even amid the barbarous customs of civil war, where all humane feelings are so readily silenced—is evident by his treatment of the Prince of Condé, his prisoner after the battle of Dreux. It caused no small astonishment when it was found that these two implacable foes, who had for years been endeavouring to annihilate each other, whose spirit of revenge had been so often aroused against each other by insults, and whose distrust of each other had been so often excited by acts of hostility—dined composedly together at the same table, and, according to the custom of the day, shared the same bed.

The death of the Duke of Guise at once checked the activity of the Catholic party and facilitated Catherine's endeavours to restore quiet. The ever-increasing state of misery in France gave rise to an urgent desire for peace, and the imprisonment of the two commanders Condé and Montmorency roused well-founded hopes that this might be accomplished. The two parties equally impatient for their liberty, and incessantly urged by the Queen-Mother to come to some pacific arrangement, did at last come to terms in 1563 by the treaty of Amboise, which ratified the edict of Jenner except in a few points, and granted the Reformers permission to hold religious services in public, in all of the towns in their possession at the time; but any meetings in country districts were to be of a private character, and to be held only in the houses of the nobility and gentry; and all that had occurred up to the Present was to be for ever buried in the Past.

Great as were the advantages which the treaty of Amboise seemed to confer upon the Reformers, Coligny was nevertheless perfectly right in denouncing it as an over-hasty piece of work on the part of the Prince of Condé, and as a piece of dissimulation on the part of the Queen. This unlucky peace put an end to all the brilliant prospects of his party, prospects that perhaps had never been so well-founded since the commencement of the civil war. The Duke of Guise, the soul of the Catholic party, the Marshal of St. André and the King of Navarre were all in their graves; the Constable a prisoner; the army without a leader, and riotous owing to not having received their pay—the finances of the party, in fact, were exhausted. On the other side was a flourishing army with England's powerful support, with friends in Germany, and sufficient stimulus in the religious zeal of the French Protestants to continue the war. Yet their most important headquarters, Lyons and Orleans, which had been taken and defended with so much bloodshed, were now on the point of being lost by a stroke of a quill; the army was to be disbanded, and the Germans to return home. And in return for all these sacrifices the Reformers had not advanced one step further towards civil equality in religious matters, they had not even obtained all their former advantages.

The first result of this treaty was an exchange of the captive leaders; and the English were driven from Havre-de-Grace by Montmorency, who accomplished this with the remains of the disbanded Protestant army. Indeed the mutual desire of both parties to hasten the proceedings did not so much give proof of the re-awaking patriotism of the French, as the indestructible force of national hatred against the English, which could not be entirely extinguished either by a sense of gratitude or by the strongest interests of passion. No sooner was the mutual enemy driven from the country, than all their former passions—aroused by the spirit of sectarianism—burst forth again in all their previous fury, and renewed the melancholy scenes of discord. Small as were the advantages which the Calvinists derived from the late treaty of Amboise, even these were now grudged them, and, under the pretext of clearly defining the different points of the agreement, an endeavour was made to restrict these within the narrowest possible compass. It was Montmorency's ambitious spirit that was busy undermining the peace, although he had himself been one of the instruments by which it had been brought about, for it was war only that made him indispensable to the Queen. The intolerant spirit of religious zeal which animated his breast was communicated to several of the governor of the provinces, and woe to the Protestants of those districts where the majority was against them! It was in vain that they appealed to the privileges which had been expressly granted to them by the treaty of Amboise; the Prince of Condé, their protector—entangled in the Queen's meshes, and tired of playing the thankless *rôle* of a party leader—was now indemnifying himself, amid the licentious repose of court life, for the long privations he had endured and which the wars had enforced upon his dominant inclinations. He contented himself with making remonstrances in writing, but these not being supported by an armed force, naturally proved of no avail, whereas one edict after another was published, still further restricting the small privileges that had been granted to his party.

Catherine meanwhile proceeded with the young king, who, in 1563, was declared to have attained his majority, on a tour round the greater part of France, in order to show him to his subjects, to suppress the spirit of rebellion by the royal presence, and to win the nation's affections for her son. The sight of the many ruined monasteries and churches—which were a terrible proof of the fanatical fury of the Protestant rabble—could scarcely have inspired the young king with a favourable idea of the new sectarians, and it is probable enough that on this occasion a vehement hatred was awakened in his breast against the adherents of Calvin.

While the fuel for a new war was being collected by the two hostile factions, Catherine was busy at court, planning a delusive scheme of reconciliation between the no less embittered minds of the leaders. A dark suspicion had for some time past sullied the honour of Coligny. Francis of Guise had fallen by the hand of an assassin, and the death of such an enemy was too fortunate an event to the Admiral, for it not to have made his enemies suspect that he had a hand in the murder. The declarations of the assassin, who, with a view to lessening his own crime, endeavoured to screen himself behind a great name, gave the suspicion a semblance of truth. It was not enough that the Admiral's acknowledged love of honour refuted the accusation, for there are times when there is no belief in any virtue. The disordered spirit of the century would not acknowledge any strength of character which aimed at rising about it. Antoinette of Bourbon, the widow of the murdered Duke, loudly and publicly accused Coligny of being the murderer, and her son, Henry of Guise, whose youthful courage already gave signs of future greatness, had already taken a terrible vow that he would avenge his father's death. This dangerous fuel for new animosities checked Catherine's intriguing policy; for, much as the dissensions between the two hostile parties favoured her love of dominion, she carefully prevented any actual outbreak of hostilities, which would have placed her in the necessity of siding with one or other of the two contending parties, as she would thus lose her independence.

By her unwearied exertions she succeeded in obtaining from the widow and from the brother of the murdered Duke, a formal apology, which acquitted Coligny of having had any participation in the murder, and thereby succeeded in effecting a seeming reconciliation between the two Houses.

But beneath this deceptive peace were developing the germs of a new and more ferocious civil war. Every privilege, however small, that had been granted to the Reformers, appeared to the zealous Catholics an unpardonable interference with the majesty of their religion, a violation of its sanctity, a spoliation of the church, which ought not to yield up even the smallest of its privileges. No agreement, however solemn, which in any way touched these inviolable privileges could, in their opinion, have any claim to validity, and hence it was the duty of every true Catholic to snatch back these privileges of which the accursed sect had deprived them. And while Rome was doing all it could to foster and even to encourage these detestable sentiments—for the Catholic leaders supported this fanatical zeal by the force of their own example—the hostile party unfortunately further increased the hatred of the Papists by making demands which seemed more presumptuous than ever, and these demands were insisted upon all the more vehemently the more that they seemed intolerable to the Catholics. "A short time ago," said Charles IX. on one occasion to Coligny, "you seemed content if you were but tolerated; now you want equal rights with us. I shall soon find that you want to drive us from the kingdom altogether, for you to remain masters of the field."

Owing to this hostile spirit between the two parties, there was no possibility of any peace that could have proved satisfactory to both parties. Catherine herself, frightened out of her state of security by the threats of the Calvinists, thought seriously of an open break with them, and the question was merely how the necessary military force was to be set in motion without the suspicious and watchful enemy being too soon made aware of its danger. The march of a Spanish army to the Netherlands, under the command of the Duke of Alba, which was to pass along the borders of France on its way, furnished a welcome pretext for equipping an army that was, in reality, wanted against the enemies within the kingdom itself. It seemed wise not to allow so dangerous a host as that under the Spanish commander to pass the threshold of France, without watching its movements and being on the guard, and even the suspicious leaders of the Protestants understood the necessity of raising an army of observation, to act as a check upon the dangerous guests, and to protect the provinces in case of any sudden attack. And, indeed, to obtain some advantage from this circumstance themselves, they very cunningly offered to arm their own party in defence of the kingdom, a stratagem by which—had it proved successful—the Calvinists hoped to accomplish against the court what the latter hoped to effect against the Calvinists. In utmost haste, therefore, Catherine set about raising an army, and a body of 6000 Swiss were also equipped for war, and the command of this armed force was entrusted wholly to men belonging to the Catholic church, the Calvinists being completely ignored. This military force followed the Duke of Alba as long as his army moved along the French frontiers, although Alba had no hostile intentions whatever against France. In place, however, of this army being disbanded when the supposed danger was over, the Swiss mercenaries were ordered to march towards the centre of France, where, it was hoped, the chief leaders of the Huguenot party might be attacked unawares. This piece of treachery came to their knowledge just in time, and the Reformers perceived with horror how close they were to the abyss into which they were to have been hurled. Some resolution had speedily to be determined upon. A conference was held at Coligny, and in a few days the whole party was in a state of activity. Their plan was to be beforehand with the court and to carry off the king from his country-seat at Monceaux, where he fancied himself perfectly secure, although surrounded only by a small body-guard. The report of the Reformers' movements, however, induced the king to flee to Meaux, to which place the Swiss soldiery were forthwith ordered to proceed. The Swiss got there in sufficiently good time, but the Prince of Condé's cavalry were also advancing, and the confederate army was becoming more and more numerous, and threatened to encircle the town in which the king had taken refuge. A bold resolution on the part of the Swiss soldiery rescued the king from the pressing danger. They offered to take him to Paris through the very midst of his enemies, and Catherine did not hesitate to entrust the king to their charge. The start was made at midnight, the king and his mother being placed in the centre of a closed square; and this moveable fortress marched onwards with lances upraised, forming a spiked wall which the enemy's cavalry was unable to break. The fierce courage with which the Swiss troops continued their march, stimulated by the sacred Palladium of majesty harboured in their midst, checked the valour of their enemies, and moreover a feeling of reverence for the person of the king—a feeling which does not readily forsake a Frenchman's breast—prevented the Prince of Condé venturing upon anything more than unimportant skirmishes. Accordingly, the king reached Paris that same evening in the firm belief that he owed life and liberty to the bravery of his Swiss soldiers.

War was now proclaimed, and, indeed, under the usual pretext that it was not being waged against the king but against the king's enemies and the enemies of the state. One of the most detested among the latter was the Cardinal of Lorraine, and as the Reformers felt convinced that it was he who had done most harm to the Protestant cause, their main determination was to effect his downfall. The Cardinal fortunately had time to evade the plot which had been concocted against him, but had to leave his house and all its belongings to the fury of his enemies.

The Prince's cavalry was, indeed, already in the field; but having been somewhat hurried, owing to the king's preparations, they had not had time to join the foot-soldiers expected from Germany, or to form a regular army. Courageous as the French nobles were who constituted the main body of the Prince's horse, they were of but little use for siege operations, and yet they were, after all, the main consideration in this war. This small body of horse nevertheless undertook to besiege Paris, pressed on in haste towards the capital, and made preparations to reduce it by famine. The havoc occasioned by the enemy in the districts round Paris exhausted the patience of the citizens, who could no longer passively brook the reckless destruction of their property. They all, of one accord, demanded to be led out against the enemy which from day to day seemed to be gaining strength at the gates. Something definite had to be done, and that speedily, before the enemy could be joined by the German troops, and thus reinforced, gain the upper hand. Hence on the 10th of November, 1567, a battle was fought at St. Denis in which the Calvinists, after an obstinate resistance, were defeated. One great gain to the party, however, was that the Constable Montmorency was mortally wounded in the battle, and his remarkable life was thus brought to a close. The dying general was rescued from the hands of his enemies by the bravery of his men, and he thus had the consolation of drawing his last breath in Paris, and in the presence of his sovereign. It was he who dismissed his father-confessor from his death-bed with the laconic remark: "Enough, good father! it would be a disgrace had I not learned in eighty years to meet death face to face for a quarter of an hour."

CIVIL DISTURBANCES IN FRANCE DURING 1568–1569.

After their defeat at St. Denis the Calvinists withdrew in haste towards the borders of Lorraine, in order to join the German mercenaries, and were pursued by the royalists under the young Duke of Anjou. They suffered the greatest privations, while the royalists enjoyed every comfort, and the unfavourable season of the year increased the difficulties of their flight and the means of procuring provisions. When, at last, they reached the further banks of the Meuse, after an incessant struggle against hunger and severe weather, not a trace of any German army was to be found, and hence, in spite of their long and arduous march, they were no better off than they had been when before Paris. Their patience was exhausted, and the common soldiers as well as the nobility now showed their discontent; neither the serious demeanour of the Admiral nor the jovial disposition of the Prince of Condé could any longer prevent open discord. The Prince insisted that their only chance was a union with the German troops, and that these soldiers must positively be awaited at the appointed place of rendezvous. "But," it was asked, "supposing they are not there either, what are the Huguenots to do then?" "Let them blow into their hands and rub their fingers," replied the Prince; for the weather was bitterly cold.

At last, however, the anxiously expected German cavalry made its appearance under the Margrave Casimir, but now another and greater difficulty presented itself. The Germans had made it a rule never to fight until they had received their pay, and in place of receiving the 100,000 thalers which they had calculated upon, only a few thousand thalers were forthcoming. It seemed as if the confederates would now—at the moment of meeting their allies—be deserted in the most ignominious manner, and that their well-founded hopes were suddenly about to be completely crushed. At this critical moment the French commander appealed to the vanity of his countrymen, and to their tender susceptibilities as regards national honour, and did not find himself deceived in his expectations. He confessed to his officers his inability to satisfy the demands of the Germans, and appealed to them to help him. The officers collected their men, informed them of the dilemma in which their commander was placed, and used all their eloquence in urging them to contribute something to assist him. In this endeavour the military leaders were supported to the utmost by the preachers, who did their best to persuade the men to believe that their liberality would be furthering the cause of

God. The device succeeded; the soldier, thus flattered, deprived himself willingly of his finery, of his rings, and of all his valuables; a general competition ensued, and it was considered a disgrace to be outstripped in generosity by a comrade. Everything was turned into money; a sum of close upon 100,000 livres was raised, and the Germans agreed to be content with this meanwhile. This is the only instance in history of one army defraying the expenses of another! The main object was thus attained, and the two allied armies forthwith again presented themselves on French soil towards the beginning of 1568.

Their strength was now pretty considerable, and was even further increased by reinforcements which they received from every quarter of the kingdom. They laid siege to Chartres, and even alarmed the capital by threatening to appear before it. But Condé was exhibiting the strength of his party only in order to obtain advantageous concessions from the court. It was against his own inclinations that he had undertaken the burdens of a war, and was anxiously hoping for peace, which promised to his love of pleasure much greater satisfaction. Accordingly he showed himself quite willing to enter into the negotiations which Catherine was making to gain time for her own purposes. And although the Reformers had sufficient reason for distrusting the offers made by the Queen-Mother, and although their circumstances had derived but little benefit from previous agreements, they nevertheless on this occasion again sacrificed their own advantage and allowed valuable time for military arrangements to slip away amid fruitless negotiations. The money distributed by the Queen at this opportunity thinned the ranks of the army day by day; and the discontent among the troops, which Catherine had cleverly managed to foster, obliged the leaders to accept her offer of a hollow peace. The king promised a general amnesty, and ratified the edict of 1562, which had favoured the Protestant cause. He, at the same time, pledged himself to settle matters with the Germans, to whom a considerable sum of money was still due; but he very soon discovered that he had promised more than he could fulfil. It was felt that these foreign guests could not be too speedily got rid of, and yet they refused to withdraw until they had been paid what was owing to them. Nay, they even threatened to lay waste the country with fire and sword unless the debt were paid. A portion of the sum demanded was, thereupon, paid, and a promise given that the rest of the money should be sent to them while on their march homewards; so the Germans, at length, began their retreat, and the further they withdrew from the centre of the kingdom, the more the courage of the court rose. When, however, it was found that the promised payments were not forthcoming, the fury of the Germans was aroused anew, and all the districts through which the foreigners passed were made to suffer for the vain promises made by the court. The atrocities which they committed on their march, forced the Queen to settle matters with them, and finally, they quitted the kingdom laden with booty. After the proclamation of peace, the leaders of the Reformers likewise withdrew to their estates in the provinces, and this division of their party, which was considered dangerous to them and unwise, in fact saved them from destruction. Although intrigues of the worst kind had been plotted against them, it was not considered advisable to attack any single individual unless the whole party could have been injured at the same time. But, as Laboureur[1] says, in order to destroy the whole party it would have been necessary to throw a net over the whole of France.

The weapons of the hostile parties were now at rest for a time, but not so their passions; it was merely an ominous calm before the coming storm. The Queen finding herself quit of the yoke of morose Montmorency and of the domineering spirit of the Duke of Guise, assumed the reins of government with the superior authority of the Queen-Mother and an experienced politician, and ruled almost uncontrolled in the name of her son; this son had attained his majority, it is true, but was still much in need of guidance, and the Queen herself was guided by the pernicious counsels of the Cardinal of Lorraine. The predominating influence of this intolerant priest, suppressed in her every trace of the spirit of moderation which had hitherto distinguished her actions. And this change of circumstances also entirely altered her system of policy. She had been full of consideration towards the Reformers as long as she required their services to counterbalance the ambition of the Duke of Guise and of Montmorency; she now, however, gave free reins to her natural abhorrence of this rising sect, as soon as she felt her own power firmly established. She took no trouble to disguise her sentiments, and the instructions she gave to the governors of the provinces exhibited the same spirit. She now persecuted that portion of the Catholic party who weie in favour of moderation and peace, and whose principles in previous years she had even made her own. The Chancellor was no longer allowed any share in the government, and was finally requested to withdraw to his estates. His adherents received the equivocal name of the *Politicians*, which was a hit at their indifference towards the interests of the Church, and contained a reproach that they sacrificed the cause of God to mere worldly considerations. Ecclesiastical fanaticism received full permission to denounce the sectarians from the pulpit, the confessionals, and the altar, and any frantic enthusiast among the Catholic clergy could thus endanger the peace by his public harangues, and preach the abominable maxim that no one need have either faith or trust in heretics. It could not but happen that these exasperating challenges of a bloodthirsty fanaticism, all too readily fired the inflammable spirit of the French people, and that they were roused to the most impassioned fury. Distrust and suspicion tore asunder the most sacred bonds, and the assassin sharpened his weapon even within the home circle, and the torch of insurrection was held aloft in country districts as well as in towns, in the provinces as well as in Paris.

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[1] Le Laboureur published *Castelnau's Memoires*, which Schiller in his introductory note to *The Historical Memoirs*, speaks of having consulted, but in this case, too, he follows Anquetil, who says on p. 239: "*Au contraire, le Laboureur remarque que cette dispersion fut leur salut, parce que pour les prendre, il auroit fallu tendre un rets aussi grand que le royaume.*"

The Calvinists did not fail to resent this treatment with the bitterest retaliation; but being too weak in numbers they could oppose the Catholic daggers only with pen in hand. They first of all looked about for secure places of refuge, in case the war should break out anew. The town of Rochelle on the west coast seemed to offer every convenience for this purpose; it was a powerful maritime town, and had enjoyed the most important privileges ever since its voluntary submission to French rule; it was animated by a republican spirit, and wealthy owing to an extensive commerce; it was defended by a good fleet, connected by sea with England and Holland, and was most advantageously situated for becoming the head of a free state, and for serving the persecuted Huguenots as a centre of action. It was to this place, accordingly, that the Calvinists transferred the main strength of their party, and for many years they succeeded in bidding defiance to the whole power of France from behind its walls.

It was not long before the Prince of Condé himself had to seek refuge within the walls of Rochelle. Catherine, in order to deprive him of every facility for carrying on war, demanded him to restore to her the considerable sums of money which she, in his name, had advanced to the German auxiliaries, and for which he and the other leaders had become security. The Prince could not keep his word without reducing himself to beggary, and Catherine, who wished to press him to the utmost, insisted upon being repaid. The Prince's inability to settle this debt justified her in breaking her agreement with him, and the Marshal of Tavennes received orders to arrest the Prince at his castle of Noyers in Burgundy. The whole province was already filled with the Queen's soldiers; every approach to the Prince's estate was blocked, every means of flight was cut off from him, when Tavennes himself, who wished to avoid having a hand in Condé's downfall, found a means of informing him of his danger and of helping him to escape. He managed to evade his enemies by means of a blank passport, accompanied by Admiral Coligny and all his family, and reached Rochelle on the 18th of September, 1568. The widowed Queen of Navarre, mother of Henry IV., who was to have been arrested in Montluc, also sought refuge in Rochelle for her son, her troops, and all her possessions, and in a short time the town was filled with a large and warlike body of men. The Cardinal Chatillon, disguised as a sailor, fled to England, where he aided his party by making negotiations, and the other leaders of the party lost no time in arming their followers, and in summoning the Germans to return as speedily as possible. Both parties took up arms, and the war again broke out in all its fury. The edict of Jenner was formally cancelled, the persecutions against the Reformers were revived with greater ferocity than ever, and any exercise of the new religion was prohibited on pain of death. All forbearance, all tolerance was now at an end, and Catherine, forgetful of her true strength, sacrificed the certain advantages she had obtained by intrigue, for the uncertain decisions of blind force.

A warlike enthusiasm animated the whole Reformed party, and the breach of faith perpetrated by the court, the unexpected withdrawal of all the decrees issued in their favour, brought more soldiers into the field than could have been collected by any warnings from the leaders or any sermons from their clergy. All is commotion and activity whenever a drum is heard; banners are seen waving in every street; from all quarters of the kingdom armed bodies of men are seen streaming towards the centre. The many insults given and received has only increased the fury of the combatants; the many broken treaties, the many disappointed expectations have made the parties irreconcilable, and the character of the nation has become brutalised by the long-continued anarchy that followed upon the civil wars. Hence, no moderation, no humanity is now shown, no regard paid to civil rights when an advantage is obtained over an enemy; no consideration is paid to either rank or age, and the march of the troops is marked everywhere by devastated fields and ruined villages. The Catholic clergy make a terrible experience of the revengeful spirit of the Huguenot rabble, for the hideous cruelty of these savage crowds are not content except with the blood of their unfortunate victims. Monasteries and churches have to suffer for the persecutions the Huguenots experienced at the hands of the dominant church. Objects of veneration are no longer reverenced by them in their blind fury, sacred relics are no longer sacred to them; in their furious maliciousness they strip the altars of their decorations, break and desecrate the sacred vessels, dash to pieces the statues of the apostles and saints, and turn the noblest temples into a heap of ruins. Their thirst for murder even opens the cells of monks and nuns, and their swords are stained with innocent blood. With inventive cruelty they even increase the agonies of death in their victims by bitter taunts, and death itself, at times, does not stay their brutal passions. They mutilated the dead bodies, and one of their party even took hideous pleasure in stringing together the ears of the monks he had struck down, and wore these round his neck by way of a badge of honour. Another of them had a hydra painted upon his banner, the heads of which were decorated in the most fantastic manner with cardinals' hats, bishops' caps, and monks' cowls; the owner himself being represented on the banner as a Hercules, tearing off these heads with powerful hands. No wonder that such glaring symbols should even further have stirred up the passions of a fanatic and savage rabble, and contributed to increase the spirit of cruelty. These excesses of the Huguenots met with terrible retaliation from the Papists, and woe to the unfortunate person who fell into their hands alive! He was condemned there and then, and voluntary submission could, at most, delay his death for a few hours.

In mid-winter the two armies took to the field; the royalists under the Duke of Anjou, who was to receive assistance and advice from the able General Tavennes; the Protestants under Condé and Coligny. The two hostile parties met at such close quarters, at Loudon, that their ranks were not separated by either river or ditch. For four days they remained in this position facing each other, without venturing upon any decisive step owing to the severity of the weather. The increasing cold finally obliged the royalists to withdraw; the Huguenots followed their example, and thus the campaign ended without anything decisive having been accomplished.

Meanwhile, however, the Huguenots did not omit—amid the quiet of their winter-quarters—to gather fresh strength for the coming campaign. They had succeeded in retaining possession of the provinces they had conquered, and many other towns were only awaiting an advantageous moment to declare themselves publicly in favour of the Reformers. Large sums of money were raised by the sale of ecclesiastical estates and by confiscations, and considerable sums were levied on the provinces. The Prince of Condé accordingly found himself enabled to increase the strength of his army, and to get it into good condition. His agents, too, were active in England as well as in Germany, preparing his co-religionists there for war, and keeping his opponents neutral. He succeeded in obtaining troops, money and arms from England, and the Margrave of Baden and the Duke of Zweibrücken brought him a considerable body of auxiliaries, so that at the beginning of 1569, Condé found himself at the head of a formidable force which promised a memorable campaign.

Condé had just started from his winter-quarters in order to open a way for the entry of the German troops, when the royalists, on the 13th of March, forced him under very disadvantageous circumstances to engage in a battle not far from Jarnac on the borders of Limousin. While cut off from the rest of his army, he was attacked by the whole body of the royalists, and his small band—after a desperate resistance—was overpowered by sheer force of numbers. Condé himself, although his leg had been fractured shortly before the engagement by a kick from a horse, fought with heroic bravery, and when his horse was killed under him, he continued fighting for some time on his knees, till loss of strength obliged him to surrender. But, at that moment, a captain of the Duke of Anjou's guards, one Montesquiou, approached him from behind, and treacherously shot him with a pistol.

Hence Condé, too, met with a violent death like all the other leaders of the two hostile factions. Francis of Guise had fallen at Orleans by the hand of an assassin, Antoine of Navarre at the siege of Rouen, the Marshal of St. André at the battle of Dreux, and the Constable Montmorency at St. Denis. Admiral Coligny was to meet with a more terrible fate still, at the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Eve.

The death of Condé was a blow deeply felt by the Protestant party, but it became evident before long that the Catholics were triumphing too soon. Condé had certainly rendered his party great services, but his loss was not irreparable. The Protestants had still on their side the illustrious house of the Chatillons; and the steadfast, enterprising spirit of Admiral Coligny, who was unwearied in his projects for assisting his co-religionists, soon roused them out of their despondency. It was more a *name* than an actual *chief* whom the Huguenots had lost in the Prince of Condé; but still even a name was important and indispensable for arousing the courage of the party, and for obtaining consideration for them in the kingdom. The spirit of ambitious independence among the nobility would never have calmly tolerated the yoke of a leader who was merely an equal, and it was difficult, nay impossible, for a private individual to hold this proud soldiery in check. It required a prince whose birth alone placed him above all rivalry, and who could exercise an inherited and undisputed command over his men. A prince of this description existed in the person of young Henry of Bourbon, the hero of this work,[1] whom we now for the first time introduce into the political arena.

Henry IV., the son of Antoine of Navarre and Jean d'Albret, was born in 1553 at Pau in the province of Béarn. He had from his earliest years been accustomed to a hardy life, and hence was physically well adapted for his subsequent warlike life. A simple training and an appropriate kind of education quickly developed the germs of his active mind. He imbibed with his mother's milk a detestation of the Papacy and of Spanish despotism; the force of circumstances made him a leader of rebels even in early youth. The exercise of weapons when a boy, made him a future hero, and early misfortune rendered him an admirable king. The House of Valois, which had ruled over France for centuries, was approaching its extinction in the weakly sons of Henry II.; if these three brothers died without leaving an heir, the House of Navarre would be called to the throne, owing to its relationship to the reigning house, even though this relationship was one-and-twenty degrees removed. The prospect of succeeding to the most illustrious throne in Europe, had even flickered round Henry's cradle; but this prospect exposed him, even in his earliest youth, to the machinations of powerful opponents. Philip II. of Spain, the most inveterate of all the enemies of the Protestant faith, could not quietly tolerate the hated sect of the Reformers coming into the possession of the most glorious of all the Christian thrones, and of thereby acquiring a decided supremacy among the European powers. Philip was the less inclined to allow the French throne to pass into the possession of the heretical house of Navarre, as he had himself a wish to obtain the precious inheritance. Henry IV. stood in the way of his ambitious hopes, and Philip's father-confessors assured him that it would be a meritorious action on his part to rob a heretic with a view to preserving so important a kingdom under the supremacy of the Apostolic chair. A dark intrigue was now concocted in conjunction with the infamous Duke of Alba and the Cardinal of Lorraine, to carry off young Henry and his mother, and to hand them over to Spain. A terrible fate would have befallen the unfortunate victims at the hands of their bloodthirsty enemies, and the Spanish Inquisition was already rejoicing in the prospect of having such important victims. But Henry's mother received timely warning of the intrigue, and moreover, it is said, from Philip II.'s own consort Elizabeth, and hence the plot was thwarted at the very outset. Such were the dangers that hovered around the boy, and prepared him at an early age for the struggles and hardships which he was subsequently called upon to endure.[1]

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[1] Namely, Sully's *Memoires*, which served as an introduction to the present essay.

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[1] See Anquetil, p. 188 f. Compare also the first sketch of *Don Carlos* (act ii. 13; *Thalia*, 1876, Part III., p. 81) where Schiller gives the following note: "This plot of the Duke of Alba's was one of the boldest and most monstrous crimes recorded in history. His object

The death of the Prince of Condé put the Protestant leaders into a state of consternation and dismay, and left the whole party without a head and the army without a leader; but at this moment the heroic Jeanne appeared at Cognac in Angoumois, where the leaders of the army had assembled, accompanied by her young son Henry, now 16 years of age, and the eldest son of the murdered Condé, who was a few years younger. Taking the boys by the hand, she advanced in front of the troops, and speedily put an end to their indecision. She addressed them saying: "The good cause has, indeed, lost an estimable protector in the Prince of Condé, but the cause itself has not fallen with him. God watches over His true worshippers. It was He who gave the Prince of Condé brave warriors to fight under him while he was still with us; but we shall have brave leaders now given to us to make us forget his loss. Here I bring you the young Prince of Béarn, my son, and offer him to you as your chief. Here, too, is the son of the man whose death you have not ceased to deplore. I hand them both over to you, and pray that, by their future actions they may show themselves worthy of their ancestors. Let the sight of these two sacred pledges teach you unanimity, and encourage you in your struggle for your religion."

A loud shout of approval greeted these words from the royal lady, and young Henry, thereupon, with a dignified mien, exclaimed: "Friends, I swear to you to fight for our religion and for our common welfare till victory or death obtains for us that freedom we all so ardently desire." Henry was forthwith proclaimed head of the

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was to carry off the widowed Queen of Navarre, her son, the prince of Béarn (afterwards Henry IV.), and her daughter from their own dominions, and to deliver them into the hands of the Inquisition in Spain. The preparations had all been most carefully made, and the issue could not well have failed to be successful, as the chiefs of the Catholic league in France all approved of the Duke of Alba's undertaking. However, owing to the garrulity of the officer who had been entrusted to carry out the Duke's designs, the Queen of Spain learned the secret, and quickly sent word of it to her intimate friend the Queen of Navarre, and the plot was thus frustrated. See Real's *History of Dom Carlos.*"

party and commander of the army, and received the homage due to him as such. The jealous spirit of the other leaders was now satisfied, and they expressed themselves as willing to submit to the guidance of Admiral Coligny, who was appointed to give the young chief the benefit of his experience, and to control the whole party in the name of his protégée.

Civil Disturbances in France between 1569 and 1572.

The German Protestants, who had always been the main support and the last resource of their co-religionists in France, again helped to restore the equilibrium between the Huguenots and the Catholics after the unfortunate day at Jarnac. Duke Wolfgang of Zweibrücken forced his way into the kingdom at the head of 3000 men, crossed the greater part of the country between the Rhine and the Atlantic, through the midst of enemies and amid great difficulties, and had almost succeeded in reaching the Protestant army, when death overtook him. A few days afterwards (in 1569) Count Mansfeld, who succeeded Zweibrücken in the command of the troops, managed to join Admiral Coligny in Guienne, and Coligny being thus strongly reinforced, found himself enabled again to bid the royalists defiance. But distrustful of Fortune, whose caprices he had so often experienced, and conscious of his inability to continue an exhaustive war with the small means at his disposal, he first made an endeavour to attain by peaceful means what he despaired of accomplishing by force of arms. The Admiral was himself honestly in favour of peace—his sentiments, in fact, were very different from the ideas usually entertained by the leaders of parties, who generally regard peace as ruinous to their projects, and find a state of disorder much more advantageous. It was greatly against his own inclination that a system of oppression was practised, but this was demanded by his position, by necessity, and the duty of self-defence. Coligny would gladly have been relieved of the necessity of defending, with sword in hand, a cause that appeared to him sufficiently justified to be settled by rational discussion. He therefore now made the most urgent appeals to the court mercifully to consider the overwhelming misery of the country, and to agree to the fair demands of the Reformers, inasmuch as they wanted nothing but to have the edicts, which had been issued in their favour, confirmed. Coligny was the more hopeful that these proposals might be favourably acceded to, as they were not the mere outcome of desperation, but were supported by a considerable military force. However, the self-assurance of the Catholics had increased with their good fortune. They insisted upon unconditional surrender from their opponents, and there was, accordingly, no alternative but to decide matters by the sword.

In order to prevent Rochelle and the other Protestant possessions on that coast from being attacked, the Admiral moved with his whole body of troops towards Poitiers, which town he did not consider likely to hold out for any length of time, owing to its great size. But upon the first news of the threatening danger, the Dukes of Guise and of Mayenne—worthy sons of the late Francis of Guise—accompanied by a large body of the nobility, had hastened to the city, determined to defend it to the very last. Fanaticism and bitterness of spirit rendered this siege one of the bloodiest episodes of the whole war, and in spite of the stubbornness of the attack, nothing could be accomplished against the steadfast resistance of the garrison.

Notwithstanding that inundations had placed their outworks under water, notwithstanding the enemy's fire and the burning oil that was poured down upon the Huguenot soldiers from the walls, notwithstanding the indomitable resistance they met with on the steep slopes of the fortifications and the heroic bravery of the garrison, the besieging party renewed their onslaughts without, however, gaining a single advantage, or being able to wear out the steadfastness of the defenders of the city; in fact, the royalists, by their repeated sallies, gave constant proof how little their courage was being exhausted. The large supply of ammunition and provisions which had been stored up in the town enabled its defenders to bid defiance to the most protracted of sieges, especially as want, bad weather, and sickness soon began to create great havoc in the camp of the Reformers. Dysentery carried off a large portion of the German troops, and Admiral Coligny himself became ill in the end, after most of the officers under him had been rendered unfit for service. Soon after this, when the Duke of Anjou appeared in the field, and Chattellerault threatened to lay siege to a town in the neighbourhood where the invalids had been taken, Admiral Coligny seized an opportunity for giving up the unfortunate undertaking with a semblance of honour. He succeeded, at all events, in thwarting Chattellerault's plan, but the ever-increasing strength of the enemy soon forced him to decide upon a retreat.

Everything combined to shake the steadfastness of this great man. A few weeks before the battle of Jarnac he had lost his brother d'Andelot, who had been deeply interested in his undertakings, and his right hand in the field. He now learned that the Paris parliament—which had at times acted as a beneficial check upon oppression, but at times also as a contemptible instrument in its favour—had passed the sentence of death upon him as a rebel and traitor against the king, and had offered the sum of 50,000 gold pieces for his head. Copies of this proclamation were distributed not only over all France, but, in translations, over all Europe, with a view of tempting murderers by the glitter of the promised reward, to come from abroad, in case no resolute hand should be found in France itself to commit the dastardly crime. However a willing hand was found among the Admiral's own retinue—and, in fact, his own valet was found to have concocted a plot to take his life. The imminent danger was, however, averted by a timely discovery; still the invisible dagger of treachery henceforth robbed Coligny of all peace of mind.

These personal calamities were rendered more burdensome owing to the responsibility of his position as leader of the army, and owing to the public misfortunes that befell his party. For the Protestant army had become greatly diminished by desertions, sickness, and encounters with the enemy; whereas the royalist army was always receiving reinforcements, and pursuing its opponents with increased vehemence. The superiority of his foes was now much too great for Coligny to venture upon the doubtful issue of an encounter, and yet this was what his soldiers urgently demanded, especially the German auxiliaries. They gave him the choice either of leading them to battle, or of paying them the money due to them; and as it was impossible for him to comply with the latter request, he found himself compelled to consent to lead them to battle.

The Duke of Anjou's army surprised Coligny at Moncontour (on the 3rd of Oct. 1569), where his troops happened to be in a bad position, and defeated him in a decisive battle. All the resoluteness of the Protestant nobility, the bravery of the German soldiery, and Coligny's own presence of mind could not prevent the total destruction of the army. Almost the whole of the German infantry were cut down, the Admiral himself was wounded, the remainder of the army was scattered, and the greater part of their baggage was lost. The Huguenots had not had a more unfortunate day during the whole war. The Prince of Bourbon was rescued during the battle and taken to St. Jean-d'Angely, where Coligny, after having been wounded, retreated with the remainder of his troops. Of an army which had consisted of 25,000 men, only some 6000 could be collected, and yet the enemy had not made many prisoners. The fury of the civil strife deadened all feelings of humanity, and it was only the blood of their opponents that could satisfy the revengeful spirit of the Catholics. They struck down with heartless cruelty all those who raised their weapons or begged for quarter; the remembrance of similar atrocities which the Huguenots had committed against them made them inexorable.

A general state of despair now prevailed, and all was considered lost. Many already spoke of fleeing from the kingdom *en masse*, and of seeking a new home in Holland, England, or one of the northern countries. A large body of the nobility deserted Coligny, who found himself without money, without men and without authority, in fact, he seemed to have lost everything except his own heroic courage. His beautiful castle and the neighbouring town of Chatillon were seized by the royalists and burnt to the ground with everything they contained. And yet Coligny was the only one of his party who did not lose hope amid these melancholy circumstances. His quick perception kept in view the means of succour still at the disposal of the Reformers, and he managed most successfully to make his followers perceive that assistance might yet be obtained. A Huguenot leader, Montgomery by name, had fought with success in the province of Béarn, and was ready to lead his victorious army to join Coligny. Germany, too, was still a rich storehouse for mercenaries, and England likewise might still be expected to furnish help. In addition to this, the royalists in place of actively following up their victory, and pursuing the routed enemy to their last hiding-places, lost precious time in making useless sieges; this gave the Admiral a welcome interval for restoring the strength of his party.

The want of a proper understanding among the Catholics themselves contributed not a little in furthering Coligny's plans. The governors of the provinces did not all obey the commands they received; Damville in particular, the governor of Languedoc, a son of the famous Constable Montmorency, was especially accused of having aided the Admiral in his flight through Languedoc. This proud vassal of the crown, and otherwise an inveterate opponent of the Huguenots, had fancied himself neglected by the court, and his ambitious spirit was aggrieved that some men had won laurels in the war, and others again were in the possession of offices which he regarded as heirlooms of his own family. Then again, the brilliant successes of the Duke of Anjou—which could not exactly be regarded as the Prince's own achievements—had aroused the envy and jealousy of the young king and of the nobles immediately around him. The vain-glorious monarch felt that he had himself as yet not done anything towards achieving renown; and the Queen-Mother's evident preference for the Duke of Anjou, and the praise that was bestowed upon this privileged favourite by all the court, wounded the king's pride. And as he could not with any good grace remove the Duke of Anjou from the army, the king himself took the post of military commander-in-chief, in order to share with the Duke the renown of the victories that had been gained; yet neither of them had any real claim to the distinction. The bad measures which this spirit of jealousy and intrigue induced the Catholic leaders to adopt, rendered all the fruits of their dearly-bought victory of no avail. It was in vain that the Marshal of Tavannes—to whose military skill alone the party owed its previous good fortune—insisted upon the enemy being pursued. His advice was that Coligny should be followed till he quitted France, or was obliged to take refuge in some fortified place, where they could then give the death-blow to the whole party. As these representations met with no response, Tavannes resigned his post and withdrew to his province of Burgundy.

His party now, without further delay, attacked the towns which favoured the Huguenots. Their first efforts were successful, and they were already flattering themselves that the outworks of Rochelle would be taken without much trouble, and that the headquarters of the whole Bourbon faction would thereupon be more readily captured. But the brave resistance offered by Saint Jean-d'Angely disappointed their proud expectations. The town held out for two months defended by its intrepid commander De Piles; and when, at last, extreme distress forced it to surrender, winter had approached and the campaign was brought to a close. The possession of a few towns was thus the whole result of a victory which, had it been properly followed up, might perhaps have completely put an end of the civil war.

Coligny, meanwhile, had lost no time in taking advantage of the bad policy of his enemies. His infantry had been almost totally destroyed at the battle of Montcontour, and 3000 horse was all the military force he now had, barely sufficient to face the country folk who pursued him. But this small band obtained fresh enlistments in Languedoc and in Dauphiné, and was further reinforced by Montgomery's victorious troops. The numerous adherents of the Reformation in this part of France not only made it easy for Coligny to find recruits there, but the soldiers themselves easily obtained shelter; and besides this the popularity of the Bourbon princes—who joined in all the hardships of the campaigns, and gave good proofs of their heroism—induced many volunteers to serve under their flag. And although the contributions of money that came in were small, the town of Rochelle in some measure supplied what was wanting. A number of privateers belonging to this maritime city succeeded in capturing a number of prizes, and were required to hand over the tenth part of their booty to the Admiral. By means of all these arrangements, the Huguenots so completely recovered from their defeat during the winter, that in the spring of 1570 they poured out of Languedoc like a mighty stream, and reappeared in the field more formidable than ever.

They had received no mercy at the hands of their enemies, nor did they show them any now. Infuriated by the ill-treatment they had so often experienced, and rendered savage by a long series of misfortunes, they now ruthlessly shed the blood of their enemies at every opportunity, oppressed every district through which they passed by making heavy requisitions, or laid waste the country with fire and sword. Their march was directed to the capital, where they hoped by a defiant attitude and by force to obtain peace on fair terms. A royal army of 13,000 men which met them in Burgundy under Marshal Cosse, was unable to check their advance. A battle ensued in which the Protestants obtained various advantages over an enemy greatly their superiors in number. They now dispersed along the banks of the Loire, and proceeded to the threshold of Orleanois and Isle de France, and alarm was even felt in Paris at the rapidity of their advance.

Their attitude of determination had its effect, and the court at last, began to talk of peace. The royalists dreaded an encounter with a body of men who, although inferior in number, were animated with a spirit of desperation, and who, having nothing further to lose, were ready to sell their lives at a high price. The royal treasury was exhausted, the army greatly reduced, owing to the withdrawal of the Italian, German and Spanish auxiliaries, and fortune seemed to be everywhere favouring the rebels. However hard it was to the Catholics to have to submit to the defiant attitude of the sectarians, and however unwilling many of the latter were to lay down their weapons, and to give up their hopes of booty and their lawless freedom, still the increasing misery silenced all opposition, and the leaders so earnestly expressed their wish for peace, that it was at last proclaimed in August of that same year, under the following conditions.

The Reformers received a promise from the court that all that had taken place in the past should be forgotten; they were to be permitted the free exercise of their religion in every part of the kingdom, except at court, and to receive back all the estates of which they had been deprived from religious considerations, and to be admitted, on equal terms with the Catholics, to hold offices of state. Besides this, for two coming years, four places of retreat were to be assigned to the Protestants, which places they were to be allowed to garrison with their own troops under the control of officers of their own party. The princes of Bourbon, together with twenty members of the highest nobility, were to take an oath that these four towns (Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité had been selected) were to be given up again after the specified two years. Hence it was again the court that had to give way, and their concessions in no way won the gratitude of the Reformers, for they had not been made spontaneously, and were indeed, only an ignominious proof of their helplessness.

Things now again assumed their former aspect of order, and the Reformers with their usual heedlessness gave themselves up to the enjoyment of their hardly-earned religious liberty. And yet the more they became convinced that the advantages obtained were not in any way due to the goodwill, but rather to the weakness of their adversaries, and to their own strength, the more necessary it became to preserve this relative strength and to watch the movements at court. And, in truth, the submissiveness of the court was much too great for any confidence to be placed in it, and without judging from what subsequently happened, it may with tolerable probability be maintained that the first suggestions of the atrocities perpetrated two years subsequently, were made about this time.

The many failures, the many surprising changes in the fortunes of the war, the many unexpected sources of help obtained by the Huguenots, must have convinced the court that it was a vain endeavour to use force in checking this party which constantly showed fresh vigour and increased strength, or to acquire any absolute advantage over it by any of the means hitherto employed. As they were dispersed all over France, the party was sure never to suffer a total defeat; and experience had taught the Catholics that all the injuries inflicted upon them, would never actually affect the vitality of the party itself. When oppressed in one part of the kingdom, they would rise up more formidable in another, and every new misfortune seemed only to fire their courage, and to increase the number of their followers. What they lacked in inward strength, was compensated for by the steadfastness, the wisdom and the intrepidity of their leaders, who never lost courage by misfortune, were never deluded by cunning, and never dismayed by danger. Coligny alone, was worth a whole army. One of the ambassadors of the court, when negotiating with the Huguenots about peace, is reported to have said, "If the Admiral were to die *to-day*, we would not grant you as much as a glass of water *to-morrow*. It is his name alone that obtains for you more consideration than your whole army put together, even though it were twice as large as it is." As long as the cause of the Reformers was in such hands, every attempt to suppress them necessarily failed. Coligny it was who held the scattered forces together, it was he who taught them wherein lay their true strength, and how to use it; he it was who obtained for them consideration and support from foreign countries, who raised up the party after a defeat, and upheld them with a firm hand when they were on the brink of despair.

The conviction that the fate of the whole party depended upon the downfall of Coligny, had induced the Paris parliament to issue—during the preceding year—that scandalous proclamation which was meant to encourage some assassin to take the Admiral's life. But as this object had not been accomplished, and as, in fact, the proclamation had been revoked by the conditions of the late peace, the Catholics felt that their object must be attained by some other means. Irritated by the perpetual obstacles which the defiant spirit of the Huguenots had raised against the royal authority, and encouraged in their sentiments by the Romish court—which considered the destruction of the sectarians the only means of saving the Church—and also incited by the dark and cruel spirit of fanaticism which silenced all feelings of humanity, the Catholics at length determined to rid themselves of their dangerous foes by one decisive blow. If they were suddenly to be deprived of all their leaders, and a general massacre of the party were speedily to diminish their numbers, this—the Catholics flattered themselves—would thrust the heretics back for ever into nothingness; it would, in fact, be cutting a diseased member off from an otherwise healthy body, the flaming brand of civil war would be destroyed for all times to come, and Church and State would be saved by one single stroke. It was with delusive arguments of this kind that religious hatred, ambition, and revenge silenced the voice of conscience and of humanity, and made religion responsible for a deed for which even the most savage community could have found no excuse.

Before this decisive blow could be given, however, they had first of all to secure their victims, and here an almost unsurmountable difficulty presented itself. A long series of broken promises had deadened all feelings of trust in both parties, and the Catholics had given too numerous and too unequivocal proofs of the maxim that: "No oath was binding towards heretics, no promise towards them sacred." The leaders of the Huguenots believed in no other security than was to be obtained by keeping at a distance and maintaining the strength of their strongholds. And even after the proclamation of peace, they increased the garrisons of their different towns, and showed how little they relied upon the king's word, by speedily repairing their fortifications. What possibility was there of enticing them out of their entrenchments, and of bringing them to the slaughter-house? What likelihood was there of being able to secure all, even though a few might be outwitted? They had long since taken the precaution of keeping apart, and even though one of their number might trust the honesty of the Court, the rest would be all the more likely to draw back in order that he who fell might have an avenger in reserve. And yet *nothing* would be accomplished unless *all* were done; the blow would, in fact, have to be a general and a decisive one, or else had better not be ventured upon at all.

Accordingly, the main thing to be done was to wipe out the remembrance of former acts of faithlessness, and to regain the lost confidence of the Protestants. In order to effect this, the Court completely changed the system of policy it had hitherto pursued. In place of favouritism in the law-courts—respecting which the Reformers had had so much reason to complain even in times of peace—the most equal justice was henceforth observed, and the insults which the Catholics had practised against them with impunity were no longer allowed; all breaches of the peace were punished in the severest manner, and all fair demands were acceded to without hesitation. In short, all distinctions between the two creeds seemed to have been done away with, and the whole kingdom appeared one peaceful family, the different members of which being all controlled with equal justice by Charles IX., and regarded by him with equal affection. In the midst of the storms which shook the neighbouring countries—which disturbed Germany and threatened to overthrow the Spanish supremacy in the Netherlands, which devastated Scotland, and made Queen Elizabeth's throne totter in England—France was enjoying an unusual time of deep repose, which seemed to give evidence of a complete revolution in the sentiments of the nation, and of a general change of principles; for these changes had not been preceded by any decisive military action of which they could be said to have been the result.

Marguerite of Valois, the youngest daughter of Henry II., was still unmarried, and the young and ambitious Duke of Guise ventured to raise his hopes of obtaining this sister of the King's in marriage. The hand of the princess had already been sought by the King of Portugal, but without success, for the still all-powerful Cardinal of Lorraine would not consent to give her to any one but his own nephew. "The eldest prince of our House," said the proud prelate to the ambassador sent by Sebastian, "obtained the eldest sister, the younger brother shall have the younger sister." But as Charles IX.—a monarch very jealous of his dignity—was displeased at this bold presumption in a vassal, the Duke of Guise appeased his wrath by a hasty marriage with the Princess of Cleves. But to see an enemy and a rival in possession of what he had not been allowed to aspire to, must have all the more irritated the Duke's pride, as he could flatter himself of having won the affections of the princess.

Young Prince Henry of Bearn it was upon whom the King's choice fell: whether his intention was actually to create an alliance between the Houses of Valois and Bourbon by this marriage, and thereby to put an end for ever to the seeds of discord, or whether he meant the marriage merely to act as a blind to the distrust of the Huguenots, and to entice them the more surely into the snares laid for them. At all events the marriage was spoken of even at the time of the negotiations for peace, and however great the Queen of Navarre's distrust may have been, still the proposal was much too flattering to be declined without giving offence. As, however, the gracious offer was not accepted with the anticipated enthusiasm that seemed due to the importance of the offer, it was renewed before long, and repeated proofs were given of a sincere desire for reconciliation, in order to dissipate Queen Jeanne's doubtful hesitation.

About this time Count Louis of Nassau, brother of Prince William of Orange, had visited France to urge the Huguenots to come to the assistance of their co-religionists in the Netherlands against Philip of Spain. Count Louis found Coligny completely in favour of this succour being given. Inclination, as well as political considerations, would never have permitted this venerable chieftain to see the cause of religious freedom—a cause for which he had fought with such heroic bravery in his own country—fall for want of help, even in a foreign land. Coligny was passionately attached to his principles and to his religion, and his generous heart had sworn eternal warfare against oppression, wherever and against whosoever it might be exercised. In accordance with these sentiments Coligny regarded any cause that touched the question of religious liberty, his own, and anyone who fell a victim to ecclesiastical or secular despotism might count upon his cosmopolitan principles and upon his active aid. It is a characteristic trait of rational love of liberty that it enlarges both mind and heart and extends its sphere of thought as well as of action. Being founded upon an enthusiastic feeling of human worth, it will not tolerate innate rights being trampled upon by others.

The enthusiastic interest shown by the Admiral in the endeavour of the Netherlanders to acquire their freedom, and his resolve to lead a body of armed Huguenots to assist the Republicans, was, however, also justified by the most important political considerations. Coligny knew and feared the excitable and lawless spirit of his party who had been so grievously insulted on so many occasions; he knew that they would be quickly aroused by any supposed injury, and that, having been long accustomed to perpetual disturbances, they had become so unused to an orderly life that they would be apt to return to their old reckless ways. The warlike nobility, too, who were anxious to obtain their independence, would not likely be willing to lead an inactive life in their castles, or to tolerate the restraint which the terms of peace put upon them. Nor was it to be expected that the fervent enthusiasm of the Calvinistic preachers would long keep within the confined limits of moderation, which the circumstances of the time demanded. Hence, in order to avert the troubles which threatened sooner or later to burst out anew, owing to a mistaken religious zeal, and the still smouldering distrust of both factions, it was proposed to employ in a foreign country the bravery and the courage which it was neither possible nor indeed even desirable to suppress entirely, till their own country might be in need of them. The war in the Netherlands was, therefore, the very thing that could have been wished, and even the interests and the honour of the French crown seemed to make some closer participation in it a matter of necessity. France had already keenly felt the mischievous influence of the Spanish intrigues, and it had even more to fear from Spanish interference in the future, unless its dangerous neighbour were kept well occupied within its own borders. The encouragement and support which Spain had given to France's discontented subjects seemed to justify retaliation, and a favourable opportunity now offered itself. The Netherlands expected help from France which could not be refused without making them dependent upon England, and this could not but prove injurious to French interests. Why should a dangerous rival be allowed to exercise an influence which could be exercised by France itself, and an influence which, moreover, would cost the country nothing, as the Huguenots themselves offered to give the necessary assistance, and were ready to employ in a foreign land forces that endangered the peace of their own kingdom.

Charles IX. seemed to feel the importance of these reasons, and evinced a great desire to meet the Admiral to discuss the subject fully with him by word of mouth. This proof of the royal confidence Coligny was the less able to resist, as the question was one that lay nearest his heart after his interest in his own country. Coligny's weak point, the one where he could be touched, had been discovered; his wish to see his favourite scheme furthered as speedily as possible overcame all other considerations. His own principles, which were above all suspicion, nay, his very prudence, led him into the snare. While others of his party ascribed the changed attitude of the Court to secret designs, Coligny found it more natural to consider its procedure due to a wiser system of policy which the government had been forced to adopt as a result of their many unfortunate experiences. There are wrong-doings which an upright man cannot look upon as possible till he has himself been the victim of them; and a man of Coligny's character may be excused for having believed his king capable of an act of moderation—although he had never given proofs of it before—rather than believing him capable of an atrocious act which would have disgraced any human being, much more so the dignity of a monarch. The many flattering advances made by the Court also rendered it necessary that the Protestants should give them a trial of confidence; for a sensitive enemy may easily be further irritated by a continued state of distrust, and actually come to deserve the bad opinion which it seemed impossible for them to avert.

The Admiral, accordingly, resolved to present himself at Court, which had meanwhile removed to Touraine for the convenience of the Queen of Navarre, with whom a meeting had been arranged. It was with feelings of great misgiving that Queen Jeanne took this step, which, however, she could no longer avoid, and her son Henry and the Prince of Condé were handed over to Charles. When Coligny arrived and was about to kneel before the king, Charles embraced him exclaiming: "Now we have you at last. We have got you, and you shall not readily escape us again. Yes, my friends," he added with a triumphant look, "this is the happiest day of my life." Coligny received the same kind welcome from the Queen-mother, the princes, and all the assembled nobles; the greatest joy and delight was expressed on every face. The happy event was celebrated for several successive days amid the most brilliant festivities, and not a trace of the old feelings of distrust was allowed to cloud the general state of cheerfulness. The marriage of the Prince of Bearn with Marguerite of Valois was discussed; all the difficulties that cropped up respecting the differences of their religions and the marriage ceremony had all to give way to the king's impatience. The king and Coligny had also several conferences to consider the state of affairs in Flanders, and on every occasion the king showed an increase of good-will towards the servant with whom he had now become reconciled. Some little time afterwards, Coligny was even permitted to pay a short visit to his castle of Chatillon, and as he returned immediately upon being summoned back, he was permitted to repeat the journey during that same year. Mutual confidence was thus again restored almost imperceptibly, and Coligny began to feel himself perfectly safe.

The zeal with which Charles urged on the marriage of Henry of Navarre, and the extraordinary favours that were conferred upon the Admiral and his party, excited as much dissatisfaction among the Catholics as they aroused misgivings and suspicion among the Protestants. Whether we assume with some Protestant and Italian writers, that this behaviour of the King's was a mere mask, or whether we consider with de Thou and the authors of the *Mémoires* that the King was, *at this time*, acting honestly as far as *he himself* was concerned, at all events his attitude both towards the Reformers and the Catholics was equally suspicious; for in order to preserve his secret he would be obliged to deceive the one party as well as the other. Yet how could even those who were in the secret be certain that the personal virtues of the Admiral may not finally have exercised their influence over a sovereign who was not at all incapable of appreciating good qualities? Who can tell that this experienced statesman may not finally have made himself indispensable, and that his advice, his arguments, and warnings may not, at last, have found acceptance? It is not surprising that the zealous Catholics were indignant at these proceedings, that the Pope himself could not in any way explain the King's new attitude, that Queen Catherine even became anxious, and that the Guises began to fear what might become of their influence. These fears led to a closer league between the Guises and the Queen-mother, and it was resolved that these mischievous alliances should be destroyed whatever the cost might be.

The contradiction of historians, and the mystery which enshrouds the whole matter, prevents any satisfactory light being obtained regarding the King's sentiments at the time, or of the actual nature of the conspiracy which subsequently broke out with such terrible violence. If we could trust Capi-Lupi, a Roman writer and eulogist of the proceedings on St. Bartholomew's Eve, then Charles IX. could not be painted in blacker colours; but although historical criticism may believe anything *bad* where a *friend* is the reporter, this cannot be done when the friend (as is actually the case here) fancies he is thereby glorifying his hero and *calumniates* him as a *flatterer*.[1] This writer tells us in the preface to his work[1] that, "A papal legate was sent to France with a message to admonish the most Christian King to break off his alliances with the Sectarians. After having given the monarch most impressive representations and urged him to the utmost, the King exclaimed with a significant gesture: 'If only I might tell your Eminence all! You as well as the Holy Father would have to admit that this marriage of my sister was the best possible means of succouring the true religion in France, and of destroying its enemies. But,' he added with great emotion, while pressing the Cardinal's hand, and at the same time placing a diamond ring on his finger, 'have confidence in my royal word. Have but a little patience, and the Holy Father himself will praise my plans and my religious zeal!' The Cardinal would not accept the diamond and expressed himself satisfied with the King's promise." But even granting that this writer's pen was not guided by any blind fanatical zeal, he must have obtained his information from very untrustworthy sources. There is some probability in the supposition that the Cardinal of Lorraine—who was in Rome at the time—may have encouraged some such stories, if he did not himself invent them, in order that the curse of the massacre in Paris—from which he could not free himself altogether—might partially at least fall upon the King.

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[1] Polemics against Anquetil, I. p. xxxvi.: "*Le but de Capi-Lupi étoit de louer la Saint-Barthélemi; par consequent on pout l'en croire sur les horreurs qu'il raconte.*"

Charles's actual demeanour at the time of the massacre unquestionably speaks more against him than the above unauthenticated reports; but even though, in the vehemence of his passionate temper, he had sanctioned the fully-matured plot, and agreed to its being now carried out, still this would not prove anything as regards his having previously connived at it. The atrociousness and hideousness of the crime lessens the probability, and our respect for human nature must help us to exonerate him. Such a complicated and long chain of deception, such impenetrable and continued dissemblance, such an utter suppression of all human feelings, such audacious trifling with the holiest pledges of trust, seems to demand a complete villain, one who has become hardened by long experience, and has thoroughly mastered his own passions. Charles IX. was a youth whose violent temper had the mastery over him, and whose passions were not curbed by any thought of moderation owing to his having early come into the possession of supreme power. A character such as this is not at all compatible with such a studied part; and such an extreme degree of wickedness is not compatible with so young a mind, not even when the youth is a king, and a son of Catherine of Medicis.

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[1] *Le Stratagême ou la Ruse de Charles IX., roi de France, contre les Huguenots, rebelles à Dieu et à lui, écrit par le Seigneur Camille Capi-Lupi*, &c. 1574.

But whether the king's conduct was meant to have been upright or not, the leaders of the Catholic party could not watch the altered aspect of affairs with indifference. In fact, as soon as the Huguenots appeared to have obtained a firm footing at Court, the Catholics quitted it noisily, and Charles allowed them to depart without further ado. The Huguenots, however, began to assemble in Paris in greater numbers as the day of Henry of Navarre's marriage approached. However, the nuptials had suddenly to be postponed, owing to the unexpected death of Queen Jeanne, who drooped and died a few weeks after her entry into Paris. All the distrust which the Calvinists had previously felt was aroused anew by the queen's death, the supposition being that she had been poisoned. Still, as this suspicion was not confirmed even after the most searching inquiries, and the king's attitude remained absolutely unchanged, the storm soon passed by.

Coligny was at this time residing at his castle of Chatillon busily engaged with his pet schemes connected with the war in the Netherlands. Various hints were given him of the impending danger, and not a day passed without his receiving numerous letters of warning written with a view to prevent his returning to the Court. But all this well-meant zeal on the part of his friends only wearied Coligny's patience without shaking his confidence. It was in vain that he was told of the troops which the Court was amassing in Poitou, and which, it was maintained, were destined to march against Rochelle; Coligny declared that he knew better what these troops were wanted for, and assured his friends that the preparations had been undertaken at his own suggestion. It was in vain that his attention was drawn to the money being raised by the king, and which seemed to indicate some great enterprise; Coligny assured them that this enterprise was nothing else than the war in the Netherlands which was on the point of being opened, and the details of which he had already discussed with the king. And Charles had, in fact, agreed to the representations of the Admiral, and, whether in reality or as a mask, had entered into a formal alliance against Spain with England and the Protestant princes of Germany. All the warnings Coligny received were, accordingly, of no avail, and he maintained such confidence in the king that he earnestly entreated his followers not to trouble him any more with such suspicions.

He therefore returned to Court, and in August, 1752, the marriage of Henry—now King of Navarre—was celebrated with regal splendour and amid a large concourse of Huguenots. Coligny's son-in-law, Teligny, Rohan Rochefoucauld, and all the leaders of the Calvinists were present, all feeling as perfectly safe as Coligny himself, and without the faintest foreboding of the danger hovering over them. Only a few suspected the coming storm, and sought refuge by timely flight. A nobleman, Langoiran by name, came to Coligny to ask leave of absence. "But why just now?" inquired the Admiral in astonishment. "Because you are being deceived," added Langoiran, "and I would rather escape with the fools than perish with wiser folk."

But although future events justified these predictions in the most terrible manner, still it remains uncertain how far they were well-founded at the time. According to the report of trustworthy witnesses, the Guises and the queen-mother were in greater danger than the Protestants. Coligny, we are told, had imperceptibly acquired such power over the young king that he even managed to make him distrust his own mother, and to withdraw himself from the control she still exercised over him. Coligny persuaded him to attend the war of the Netherlands in person, and to gain the victories which Catherine would only too gladly have seen obtained by the Duke of Anjou. This suggestion was not lost upon the jealous and ambitious monarch, and Catherine soon felt that she was losing her authority over the king.

The danger was imminent, and only the boldest determination could have averted the impending blow. A special messenger was despatched by the Queen summoning the Guises and their adherents to return to the Court without delay, in order that she might have their assistance in case of necessity. She herself seized her first opportunity when the king was out hunting, and she found herself alone with him; she persuaded him to follow her to a castle in the neighbourhood and when there locked herself into an apartment with him, and addressed him with all the eloquence of a mother's power; she made him the bitterest reproaches for his want of affection for her, for his ingratitude, and his want of consideration. Her grief and her lamentations overpowered him, and a few intimations of impending danger which she let fall produced their effect. The queen-mother played her part with all the arts of dissimulation in which she was an adept, and she succeeded in making the king confess that he had acted recklessly. But not content with this, she tore herself away from him, acted the part of being hopelessly aggrieved, took up her abode in a separate residence, and made her son believe that there was a complete break between them. The young king was not so thoroughly master of himself to take her at her word, or to make use of the liberty he had thus acquired. He knew what great influence his mother possessed, and his fear of her made him fancy her influence even more formidable than it actually was. He dreaded her obvious preference for the Duke of Anjou, perhaps not without good reason, and hence trembled for his life and his throne. Forsaken by his advisers, and too weak himself to form any bold resolution, he therefore hurried to his mother's residence, burst into her room, found her with his brother and surrounded by her courtiers, all the most inveterate enemies of the Huguenots. The king proceeded to inquire of what new crime the Protestants were now guilty; he maintained that he was willing to break all his connections with them as soon as he was convinced that their actions were not to be trusted.

Whereupon the Reformers' pretensions, their violence, their attacks and their threats, were represented to the King in the blackest colours. Charles was amazed and infuriated, and all opposition in him was frustrated; he left the queen-mother with the assurance that he would in future be more on his guard.

But Catherine was not content with her son's doubtful explanation. His indecision of character, which made him such an easy victim to her intrigues, might as readily and successfully be made use of by the Huguenots, and withdraw him completely from her control. She saw that these dangerous connections must be forcibly and irretrievably destroyed, and that to accomplish this she need only re-awaken the spirit of rebellion among the Huguenots by some gross insult. Four days after the marriage of Henry of Navarre, Coligny was shot at from a window as he was leaving the Louvre to return home. One shot shattered the first finger of his right hand and another wounded his left arm. Coligny pointed to the house from which the shots had been fired; his attendants hurried in through the gates, but the murderer had escaped.

CONTINUATION.

THE DISTURBANCES IN FRANCE FROM THE EVE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, 1572, TO THE DEATH OF CHARLES IX., 1574.[1]

COLIGNY'S guardian angel, it may be said, had made a last effort, by the murderous attempt upon his life, to warn the great man to flee from his fate. Yet, can any one escape from his fate? or rather, does not the better man fall with all the greater glory when attempts of all kinds have been made against him—even acts of faithlessness which he himself is incapable of even conceiving—than if he had escaped all these snares?

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[1] Dr. Rob. Boxberger, in his edition of Schiller, gives the following note in connection with this paper: "We have already observed, in our preface to these essays, that we do not consider this essay to be a work of Schiller's, although Körner, Joachim Meyer and Goedeke do regard it as his. Regnier, the French translator of Schiller's works, was the first to ascribe this essay to Paulus, and Regnier supported his supposition on Paulus' preface to the 8th vol. of the 2nd Part of the *Mémoires*. And, in fact, this preface is sufficient of itself to settle *any* doubt about the question; for what motive could have induced Paulus to say that he hoped no comparison would be made between his essay and those of Schiller's, if there was no reason for any such comparison? In proof of its genuineness, Goedeke makes the following statement: 'Paulus himself gives us a satisfactory explanation. He collected his essays from the *Mémoires* and did not make use of the chapter on the bloody marriage, and, accordingly, did not look upon it as his property. And it is not likely to be attributed to any other, as none of those who contributed to the *Mémoires* (such as Woltmann, Niethammer, Funk, and Reinwald) have claimed it as their property.' This argument, however, does not seem convincing; for Paulus could, of course, not include the essay among a collection of his own works, as it is nothing more than a somewhat abbreviated translation of Anquetil's *Esprit de la Ligue*, so that all the inferences drawn from this chapter of Schiller's knowledge of history and his views of life do not apply to him but to his authority, Anquetil. Of the numerous commentators of Schiller's works, none has hitherto carefully compared his treatise with the source, and this is the reason why the tradition of its genuineness has been so long preserved.

Coligny felt—and his whole party, as if struck by an electrical shock, felt with him—that amidst the deep stillness of peace a poisonous snake was lying in wait for him and his party, as only four days had passed since Henry of Navarre's wedding with the sister of Charles IX., when the Houses of Valois and Bourbon seemed to have clasped hands at the nuptial feast. On this occasion, however, the lurking danger had not succeeded in striking the head of the Reformed party, and of thus crippling all the members by one blow.

But where could this hydra be hiding its Lernaen head, and from what corner might it be expected to pounce forth again for a new attack? Coligny had too little of its cunning in him to find this out in time. Serpentine courses were to be found in every direction, and hence every inquiry led those seeking information away from the true seat of the mischief.

Coligny was prudent, cautious, and watchful in every direction. But of actual fear he had none whatever. The helpless insect moves its feelers anxiously about on all sides, and fear saves it from a thousand dangers. Fear thus turns prudence into cunning, and cunning can boast of being rarely entrapped, but has likewise to admit that of magnanimity it knows nothing, inasmuch as it regards everything in life as a snare. Coligny was no favourite of fortune. As a military leader he lost his advantages generally owing to the weakness of his troops, and other faults not his own. Chance did little for him. It seemed he was ever required to be *the* man of his party upon whom everything was to depend. After a misfortune when all the rest of his party seemed to lose their wits in their despair, when his hastily-collected army was in a state of semi-nakedness, without money and without bread, and threatening to dwindle away as speedily as it had been got together, when treason and court favour seemed lurking among his immediate followers like irresistible spirits, Coligny's courage always remained unshaken. His cheerful brow made his followers understand, what had appeared an impossibility to them, that various means of help were still open to them, and that they had only to make their choice. And every word he uttered seemed to communicate the composure of his own mind to the minds of those whom he was addressing. His style of speech was unaffected, dignified, powerful, often original; and considering the magnitude of his task, he showed great and unwearied activity in carrying out his plans. Steadfastness of purpose against oppression was the basis of all his enterprises at home and abroad. Let Villeroy, the courtier, blame him for endeavouring to secure liberty for the Protestants in France, and for having greatly contributed in freeing the Netherlands from the tyranny of Spain! To upturn a righteous form of government, when undivided into parties, would never have been Coligny's design. Unimpeachable moral conduct, even in his married life and towards his children, strict religiousness in fact, completed his qualification to be the chief of a religious-political party, whose whole existence was founded upon the voluntary submission of a number of brave, wealthy, and distinguished men, from the nobility as well as from the burgher class, a body of men who would never have consented to observe the requisite obedience and unanimity except towards a man of decided superiority of character.

All this must have convinced the Catholics that Coligny was the one man whose downfall would involve that of his whole party; the more so as no submission or reconciliation was to be expected from him as an enemy, nothing but his relentless severity of character. The cabal found out his weak point. He was enticed to Court by the semblance of great esteem, and a firm confidence in his opinion and in his honesty—which he was conscious of deserving—and also by the prospect of being able to serve his country as well as his own party by a league against Spain, the inveterate enemy of his religion as well as of France. He was caught; for he was in the midst of traps, and to escape these he would need to have been less fearless, less honest, and less magnanimous. Before and after the murderous attack upon his life many well-meaning persons urged him to quit Paris. "If I do that," replied Coligny, "I should either show fear or distrust. By showing fear I should offend my own sense of honour, and by showing distrust I should offend the King. I should have to face another civil war, and rather would I die than again witness the endless misery that such a war produces." Murder and disgrace were the rewards of these noble sentiments.

Coligny received a visit from the king, accompanied by a large number of courtiers on the very day he had been shot at. Charles assured the Admiral of his sympathy, and of his full confidence in him as a military chief and a faithful subject. "You are wounded, my father," he exclaimed, "but I myself feel the wounds, and I take God to witness that I shall have my revenge, one that will not readily be forgotten, as soon as the assassins are found." All too readily pacified about himself, the Admiral made but few complaints, and then endeavoured to turn the King's troubled thoughts from the outrage—which had happily been thwarted—to public concerns, to the proposed campaign in the Netherlands. This new enterprise would have bound the interests of the impulsive young monarch more firmly to the indispensable commander and to his party. But the Queen-mother, under the pretext that the wounded Admiral's strength should not be over-taxed, prevented her son having any long or private conferences with Coligny. The King was told he had better return to his game at tennis; he had, in fact, been in the midst of his favourite game, when informed of the attack upon the Admiral's life, and indignation at being interrupted in his favourite pursuit was the cause of the first outburst of his rage.

Every moment now was of the utmost importance to Catherine. Coligny's suspicions, it is true, at once fell upon the Guises. The shot had been fired from a house belonging to the Guises, and their party had apparently been so overlooked during the ascendency of the Protestants, that it was impossible to avoid suspecting them of this ignoble form of revenge, of this intended assassination. And, indeed, Catherine found it her wisest plan, in the first development of the circumstances, to cause suspicion to be directed at them. Even to her son she suggested that the Duke of Guise probably still considered the Admiral to have been his father's murderer. It was not the impossible idea, as many believe, of destroying the two parties together—however desirable this would have been to her—that suggested this piece of dissimulation. She followed the necessity of gaining a moment's time in order to consider—from the direct effects of the unsuccessful stroke—what would be the effects of a more cruel and more successful blow. She found it necessary to gather new resolution for undertaking that which must have made the humanity in her shudder, in spite of her burning wish for vengeance.

The King, meanwhile, summoned the Duke of Guise to present himself at Court to answer the accusations that had been made against him, and, indeed, the King's sister, the Queen of Navarre (in her Mémoires), considers this a palpable proof of Charles's just indignation. The Duke of Guise had, moreover, on a previous occasion aroused the King's indignation by his presumption in seeking the hand of the Princess Marguerite in marriage. Yet, strange enough! in summoning the Duke to Court, the King was most unaccountably bringing to his mother's assistance the very man whose support was absolutely indispensable to her in what was about to happen. The concurrence of all these circumstances seemed to point to the day that was to be ever remembered by the blackest of deeds.

The consent of the sovereign was all that was now wanting; and those who understood the fatal means of driving the King's unsteady mind from one extreme to the other could not have doubted that his consent would be obtained. A skilled courtier and intimate friend of the King's, was chosen by the Queen-mother to incriminate her son without further ado. With cautious care he managed to efface from the King's mind the favourable impressions left upon him by his recent visit to the wounded Admiral. He scattered seeds of suspicion in Charles's mind, aroused his old and dormant feelings of resentment, and finally stung the King's heart with the dread that his own life was in danger. Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Condé had, with unusual exasperation, demanded satisfaction for the injury done to Coligny. The whole of the actual strength of the Protestant party was now assembled in Paris as in one body. Anything might be expected from it, but, on the other hand, anything might be done with it. Had not one of the party, De Piles, had the audacity to say to the King that they would know how to obtain justice for themselves, if he lacked the courage or the will to grant it to them? The wily negotiator, when feeling more sure of having attained his object, at last exclaimed: "He who means it honestly by Your Majesty, can no longer shut his eyes to the imminent danger that threatens you and the whole realm." Catherine herself entered the room at this moment, leaning on the arm of her favourite son, Henry of Anjou, and accompanied by her most intimate adherents. Charles was aghast at hearing of the threatening dangers, amazed and ashamed of his own heedlessness when on the verge of his downfall, and when further urged by the most terrible representations, he threw himself into his mother's arms. "The Huguenots," he was told, "were already again calling the detested foreign mercenaries, Germans as well as Swiss, on to French territory. The malcontents in the kingdom were hurrying in masses to the new point of rendezvous. The fury of civil war was again threatening to distract the kingdom. The King (he was told) was being deprived of his money and his becoming dignity, was surrounded by Huguenots and suspected by the Guise party of favouring the heretics; he will be called upon to witness how the Catholics choose their commander-in-chief, and contrive to help themselves against their opponents, while the King is thrust aside by the old Admiral's overbearing presumption, and looked upon with distrust by the whole nation; and he will have to submit to being tossed helplessly to and fro between the two parties."

These dreadful visions roused Charles to a state of frenzy. He vowed death to the Admiral, death to his whole party throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom; he begged only that not a single Huguenot should escape to upbraid him in the future! And only that all might be done with despatch, in order that he himself might speedily be considered out of danger!

This was precisely the state of mind most welcome to the opponents of the Protestants. Murder was now the watchword, but the deepest dissimulation was still to be maintained, and even the King henceforth fully manifested the results of his mother's training.

The Duke of Guise was ready to take the leading part. In fact, since his brave defence of Poitiers, that is, since his nineteenth year, his fame in France had been established as an adversary of Coligny's. Besides, he had once hoped to obtain the hand of Marguerite of Valois, who had since been married to the Huguenot, Henry of Navarre. Marguerite had been inclined to favour his suit, and this would have given him a prospect to the throne of France. Persecution of the Huguenots seemed, therefore, not only to be his inevitable destiny, but was his own choice, and he practised it on every possible occasion. If his father's spirit urged him to avenge his death upon the Huguenots, his own ambition also urged him to this course, and in even louder accents told him that the moment had now come in which his party might obtain the ascendancy by exterminating the Protestants, and boldly acquiring a position by the side of the Queen-Mother.

The unsuccessful attempt upon Coligny's life was made the cover to the new resolve. The Duke of Guise declared that, owing to having been accused of the crime against Coligny—who might seek to avenge himself—it would be necessary for him and his relatives to quit the capital. "Go," replied the King with a furious look; "if you prove to be guilty, we shall find you again!" And, accordingly, the preparations seemingly made to escape from the Huguenots were in reality the speedy and utterly unsuspected preparations for the destruction of the Huguenots themselves.

The Admiral, in fact, helped his enemies to draw the snares around himself and his party. He was warned on many sides that the Guises might attempt something again before they left Paris. Some advised him to flee from the city. The upright old man, however, with the better portion of his adherents, continued to rely upon the King's word, trusted to his protection, and were given a strong body-guard from among the soldiers who had only recently entered the city. At a command from Court the Catholics were called upon to give up all the residences belonging to the Protestant nobility in the vicinity of Coligny's abode, in case his party might wish to be in his neighbourhood for safety's sake. And, indeed, the Protestants were expected to comply with this arrangement. The police urged them to make this move for the sake of protecting Coligny, and kept a register of all those who were thus gathered together. A very accurate death-list for the would-be murderers! The King of Navarre was requested to collect his followers in the Louvre in order to assist the King against the Guises, and, at the same time, to despatch his Swiss Guards to protect the Admiral. Further, in order that the necessary weapons might be collected in the Louvre, a tournament was arranged, and Coligny himself informed the King of the arrangement. Several sparks of suspicion were altogether lost upon the Huguenots, owing to the anxious attentions paid them by the Court, and it was now scarcely possible even to disturb the composure of those who had previously shown most fear. The cabal meanwhile watched its promising prey with lustful eyes. It had been driven together into one herd. The hour of midnight on the 24th of August was the time appointed by the bloody council held in the Tuileries, which council had been attended by two of the King's brothers, the Dukes of Anjou and of Angoulême, also by the Duke de Nevers, by Birague the keeper of the Privy Seal, by the Marshals de Tavannes and de Retz, and by Catherine de Medicis. This council, while arranging a general slaughter of the Calvinists, scarcely made an exception in favour of the Queen's new son-in-law, and a few others related to the royal household.

If the authors of this atrocious massacre—as is proved in the case of Tavannes—actually believed that they were thereby rendering God a service, and if this belief had been the actual inspiration of their inhuman deeds, we should, in the first instance, grieve over the impotence of the human understanding and lament the superstition of the age, but we should not altogether condemn the malefactors. If, for duty's sake, they had suppressed in themselves all feelings of humanity, we should at least have to acknowledge the honesty of their intention, while we shuddered at the atrocity of their actions. But as regards most of those who took part in the massacre, it seems a matter of certainty, to judge from their characters in other respects, that they considered the Huguenots only as a body of opponents, against whom they were glad to take any liberty, especially as their enemies happened fortunately to be heretics as well. Even Catherine herself may have had sufficient superstition to hate the Reformer in Coligny, and even to regard this inveterate hate as meritorious on her part. Yet it is certain that she would greatly have regretted if the man who threatened to check her ambition had, at that moment, rendered himself less deserving of her hate by attending mass.

Amid the deep stillness of the Eve of St. Bartholomew, which was so heavily laden with misfortune, Tavannes had already collected in front of the town hall a number of picked civic guards, whose leaders had received their orders in the King's presence. Already the Duke of Guise, with three hundred blood-thirsty followers, was waiting the appointed signal. Charles himself was at the moment silencing the voice of friendship, sympathy having made a last attempt to approach him; Count Francis de la Rochefoucauld, a companion of whom he was otherwise fond, and who had been supping with him, was after some slight hesitation allowed to leave the palace unwarned of the secret death that was awaiting him, the signal for which, in fact, the King was himself about to give. With an even greater want of feeling, Catherine urged the newly-married Queen of Navarre, her own daughter, to retire early to her husband's apartments that evening, where, of course, amid the proposed acts of vengeance upon the Calvinists, and amid the darkness of the night, the young queen might easily have fallen a victim to any murderous hand that might have been lurking about. But Catherine was ready to sacrifice everything, if only she succeeded in obtaining the victims which her intrigue had determined upon having.

And yet, when the King, after having given the signal, appeared on the balcony of the Louvre over the entrance facing the city, when the few who knew of the conspiracy, the Queen-Mother at the head, had accompanied him through the solitary corridors amid urgent persuasions, when the furies, freed from all control, were heard shrieking with delight—the authors of the massacre felt their hearts sink within them. The humanity in them was stirred for the last time. Pale and aghast, they trembled before one another, gazed in consternation at one another, and for a moment were all agreed that a message must be forthwith despatched to recall the bloody command, to stay the outburst of the atrocities which they themselves had wished, had arranged and ordered, but which now they had not the courage to face. A pistol-shot was heard: "Whether it injured any one I cannot tell," said Catherine's favourite son the Duke of Anjou, "but that it has struck the hearts of us three, that we lost all feeling and consciousness, that I do know. We were beside ourselves with terror and dismay at the thought of the slaughter that had now begun."

Too late! This cowardly repentance came too late. It was more the sickly outcome of irresolution than of reflection; it deserves consideration from the student of human nature only as a proof how excessive must have been the vehemence of passion in the hearts of those who had planned the misery that had now begun; for at the moment when their resolves were about to be carried out, all their nerve and spirit seems suddenly to have collapsed.

Coligny's spirit might have found satisfaction in seeing infamy thus self-tortured. Upon the first sound of the bells for early mass, which was the appointed signal, the Duke of Guise had hurried to the Admiral's residence with his myrmidons. At the words: "In the King's name," the gates were thrown open, and the watchmen at once struck down; the Swiss Guards slunk away terrified at the infuriated crowd that burst in and violently aroused the aged and wounded Admiral out of his first sleep. The ante-chambers were already resounding with the savage voices of the murderers mingled with the moans of the dying. Three French officers burst into Coligny's own chamber, shouting that the hour of his death had come. The pious hero was leaning against a wall in an attitude of prayer. An Italian (Petrucci) and a German nobleman (Besme) rushed at him, calling out, "Are you Coligny?"—"I am," answered the old man in a firm voice, "but, young man, respect my grey head." Yet he was stabbed then and there by Besme, who proved himself more wanting in feeling than he who slew Marius. Besme drew back his sword reeking with blood as it was, and cut his fallen foe several times across the face. In their mad fury those behind hurried up and further mutilated the corpse by striking numberless wounds.

"That's pretty well done," exclaimed Besme, grinning down at those in the court below; but as the Duke of Angoulême, a natural brother of Charles, maintained that he must see the result with his own eyes before being satisfied, the body of the murdered man was flung out of the window and fell at his feet. The duke looked inquiringly at the face that was streaming with blood, and having convinced himself that the deed had been done, kicked it—the dead lion—away from him.

Meanwhile lighted candles were to be seen at the windows of all the houses round about; the streets were closed by chains drawn across at either end; watchmen were stationed to stop those who endeavoured to escape; others forced their way into streets where the shamefully deceived Protestants—aroused out of their slumbers—fell into their enemies' hands the moment they opened their doors. In their most grievous and unexpected state of helplessness the Protestants knew of no one to advise them, knew of no one to guide them, and knew of no place of rendezvous. The Catholics recognised one another by a white badge worn round their left arm and a cross of the same colour. The symbol of the Man of Sorrows, and the colour of innocence, dubbed them the murderers of their fellow-citizens. If their victims had been allowed time to recover from their consternation; if several of them had been able to unite and to defend themselves, perhaps, in the midst of its triumph, this atrocious crime would have met with its just punishment; but only a very few managed to distinguish themselves by any resistance.

As soon as there began to be a dearth of victims in the streets, the persecutors forced their way into the houses. Neither age nor personal merit was of any avail. The Admiral's son-in-law, Teligny, was found so lovable a man that the first persons who burst in upon him to murder him, retreated in surprise. But he was soon attacked by more heartless villains. The Paris civic guards, who had withdrawn in horror when the murderous commands were first given, surpassed even the expectations of their inhuman leaders when once their fury had been aroused. Mutilated corpses were flung out of the windows, and not only dragged through the streets naked to be flung into the Seine, but dragged about also by way of merely satisfying their lust or fury. Those who escaped alive or wounded and fancied themselves saved, were often struck down by loitering parties of civilians or by armed bands belonging to the Guises, whose ferociousness Tavannes encouraged by scornful jeers: "Go on bleeding them," he exclaimed, "bleeding is as good for the health in August as in May!" This ferocious savageness in Tavannes was so greatly the result of his conviction that he was doing God and his King the greatest possible service that, in his last confession before death, he maintained that the massacre on the Eve of Saint Bartholomew was the grandest deed of his life, one which he trusted would obtain for him the forgiveness of his sins. Private hate, however, also found its victims, for religious fanaticism was made the sacred pretext for obtaining personal vengeance. Robberies, too, were committed, even by the nobility, under the shield of this blind demon. And even the King and his mother are said to have accepted presents of valuables that had been acquired by plunder. Things received new names: villainy had become condescension; jewelry that had been snatched from a dying Huguenot now seemed the very decoration fit for the soldiers of God and their earthly reward. These articles became mementoes of days when even in the King's presence and in the royal palace—where the most forsaken of men ought to feel sure of being able to demand the protection of justice—only a few had been granted their lives as a pitiable gift of mercy owing to some freak or caprice. Those who otherwise sought safety in the Louvre found their death at the palace gates at the hands of the King's guards. History even gives the names of those who saw the King himself fire at the Huguenots trying to escape from the Louvre. And an hour after the commencement of the general slaughter there was not a corner, even in the most secluded apartments of the palace, that did not show traces of bloodshed or murder. In spite of the entreaties of his pupil, the tutor of the Prince de Conti, a man of eighty years, did not escape a violent death, although the young man tried to thrust back the murderous weapons with his own helpless hands. Bleeding and distracted, Gasto de Leyran burst into the bed-chamber of the Queen of Navarre and made her his shield against the attacks of four soldiers who had pursued him. The Queen fled to her sister the Duchess of Lorraine, at whose door a nobleman was struck down at her side; she herself dropped down in the room in a state of unconsciousness, and awoke again with a feeling of renewed horror at the thought of the fate which awaited her husband as the result of the bloody marriage.

Henry of Navarre and the Prince of Condé had been summoned to the King on the day upon which the slaughter had begun, and were informed by the monarch that they might consider it an act of supreme mercy to be the only ones of the whole Huguenot party whose lives had been spared by a previous arrangement. With an infuriated look, the King thereupon demanded them both forthwith to renounce their Protestant faith as a proof that they had hitherto merely been misled. Upon entering the King's residence they had passed through a body of soldiers ready to take their lives at the first command. And even in the King's apartments they could hear at a distance the moans of their co-religionists who, after being driven out of the palace by a double line of guardsmen, were ruthlessly butchered by them. When the two princes answered the King hesitatingly, he exclaimed with one of his oaths that within three days they would have to choose between attending mass and being thrown into the Bastille. And, in fact, almost the only advantage the monarch derived from all the ruthless butchery was that he forced Henry of Navarre and his own sister to consent to an outward semblance of conforming to the Catholic Church; and the Prince of Condé, after a somewhat longer resistance, eventually followed their example.

In a frenzy of delight at the result of this night of butchery, during which his party had been in an alternate state of fear and fury, Charles's uncontrollable nature now felt no further compunction. For three days the massacre continued, wherever any hidden victim could be hunted up. And notwithstanding all these enormities, the King and his courtiers paraded round the town amid the blood, corpses, and desolation. Coligny's dead body had been maltreated in every conceivable way, flung about, and finally hung up on a gallows at Montfaucon. The King even proceeded there to enjoy the sight of the mutilated remains of the old man, whose presence only a few days before had called forth in him an irresistible feeling of reverence. Using the words of Vitellius, the King said jestingly: "An enemy's corpse always has a good smell." But even more despicable was the recklessness that accompanied his political proceedings.

While showing the most obvious sympathy with the crimes perpetrated during these days, Charles so completely disregarded every semblance of respect for himself and others that, in his communications to the governors of the provinces and to the foreign courts, he at first denied having had any hand in what had taken place, and in fact represented these occurrences as the result of the enmity between the Guises and the Chatillons; yet on the third day a solemn meeting of parliament was held to charge the murdered Admiral with the most abject treachery against the throne and the state, to brand his memory with the most ignominious charge of having been a rebel against the royal authority, and to justify the death-blow given to his party as a well-deserved punishment, and one which had received the royal sanction. So completely had Charles, more powerless than ever, become the tool of his mother's intrigues. From the very first when she had persuaded him to join the murderous plot, she had made him believe that all the abhorrence that might be aroused would fall upon the Guises, while all the gain of being quit of all fear and danger in the future would be his entirely. However, immediately after the accomplished massacre, when a new faction of the Montmorencies threatened to arise against the Guises to avenge the death of Coligny and his adherents, the King was forced to admit the part he had taken in the occurrences; otherwise he would have appeared a weak and useless occupant of the throne, under whose rule any one might venture to act as they pleased. In order to possess the appearance of what he was not and never could be, the King actually became what he blushed to own he was, and to undertake things for which he neither possessed the courage or the cunning. In order not to appear weak, he *was* weak enough to allow all the others to make him a screen for their own misdeeds; and in their name became that object of abhorrence with which his own people, foreign countries, and posterity must mercilessly regard the monarch under whose rule a Saint Bartholomew's Eve could be so shamefully dishonoured. And in return for this eternal shame, the King did not even for a moment attain the object which the authors of the misery had persuaded him to believe would be his reward.

There is true satisfaction in the historical observation that it is precisely the most determined of infamous undertakings—even when every species of villainy has unweariedly helped in planning it, and even when it has been carried out with the utmost savageness and protected in its consequences by the strongest of bulwarks, by the throne itself—that nevertheless it fails in its object, often leads to the very opposite results, and gains nothing for those who took part in it except the double mortification of having made an unsuccessful endeavour, and of experiencing the bitter reproaches of their own conscience.

The leaders of the victorious party did not, it is true, fail to use both cunning and influence to secure to themselves the fruits of their deeds, with regard to which there seemed to be no call for any remorse, as the plot had proved a *success*—that false criterion between evil and good.

A few of the persecuted party were granted a formal trial; but these so-called trials were merely judicial murders. The character of the late Admiral was discussed and examined by a legal procedure, and his name branded as a traitor and a would-be regicide; and this decree was ordered to be publicly proclaimed in all the principal towns throughout the kingdom, amid the most disgraceful proceedings. His escutcheon was broken to pieces by the public executioner, his children were declared to have confiscated their property, and to have lost every chance of obtaining government offices, his castle was destroyed, and was thus a melancholy memorial of his disgrace. Further orders were given throughout France that all Huguenots were to be prosecuted as participators in Coligny's crime. Yet nothing could prevent the effects produced by the late occurrences. What the Parliament of Paris could not venture to do in the immediate vicinity of the throne—and it was in that assembly that the President, De Rou, could hardly suppress his sobs when seeing the King come forward as Coligny's accuser—was accomplished in the provinces by the courage of some of the governors. One of them—Count d'Orthe, commander of Bayonne—upon receiving the King's blood-thirsty commands, replied by letter that he knew "his people to be good citizens and brave soldiers, but that there was not a single executioner to be found among them." Others, and history even mentions a bishop among them, refused to carry out the King's injunctions. The sudden deaths of some of these protectors of innocence suggested poisonings. But still in Dauphiné, Provençe, Bourgogne, and Auvergne more especially, the Protestants were not persecuted. Many of the most illustrious Huguenot families had not been in Paris at the time of the massacre; others had managed to escape. Many sought refuge in foreign countries; and among the honest Germans in particular, whether they were Catholics or Protestants, the abhorrence felt towards the persecutors induced some to offer to help the refugees in their revenge, while others were at all events induced to spare them out of sympathy. A few advantages obtained over the Catholics by the Protestants who had remained in France, very soon awakened fresh hopes. When danger has reached its utmost limit, an increase of strength is produced as soon as the first shock has been overcome.

All too quickly did the servants of the holy see at Rome celebrate their triumph over the French heretics by every kind of secular and spiritual outburst of joy, by Church masses and the booming of cannons. All too thoughtlessly did the Court at Paris fancy that it must celebrate the massacre of the Huguenots for ever by holding an annual festival in commemoration of their destruction. The Huguenots brought themselves into remembrance again before long by taking a bloody revenge. Seventy thousand Calvinists — according to Sully — had fallen in France during the week of butchery. But he whom such a chain of wickedness has not utterly ruined, soon considers himself more invulnerable than he is! It was partly fear, partly cunning, that induced the King, on the 28th October, to publish a decree which granted the Protestants protection everywhere, and the restoration of all their estates.

Cunning and prudence, how unlike are these two sisters! For while the latter approaches its goal by paths that are sanctioned by uprightness, the former advances by crooked or false paths, and never reaches its goal, or reaches it only to its own disgrace. The Court vacillated between cruelty and consideration; and yet all it accomplished by this was to increase the feelings of distrust by the never-ending cabals at Court, and further to expose the weakness of the royal party. For a *party* the king now had of his own. The whole grand predominance which the majesty of the throne possesses is lost when the king, led by the vehemence of party spirit, allows himself to be dragged down to join one faction against the other. As long as he maintains his position upon the throne, his presence commands respect from both parties. But when he moves towards either side, the oppressed party considers the seat of mutual justice vacated. Everything that then happens to them is persecution, and is no longer accompanied by that mysterious feeling which otherwise causes state punishments, inflicted by the representatives of the Law, to appear more as acts of control than of irritation.

While the Protestants, amid the advantages derived from the inconsistencies which have ever accompanied despotism, were again collecting in their strongholds, they found unexpected and fresh succour in a new party which must have been far more formidable to the royalists; for it had adherents in the midst of the enemy, and even at Court. A fellow-feeling against injustice brings unlooked-for friends to the oppressed. Not a few of the most eminent Catholics became disposed to show greater leniency toward the Huguenots, the more intolerably their own sense of uprightness was shocked by the underhand proceedings taken against them. The Duke d'Alençon even—Charles IX.'s third brother—ever remembered the mental superiority of the shamefully ill-used Admiral.

And many others who, owing to their position and birth were, so to say, justified in being unconcerned about differences of religious opinions, came to see what Catherine's intrigues, together with Charles's impetuous nature, might unquestionably have accomplished against those who stood in her way. Who could have persuaded the powerful Montmorencies that they were any less in danger than their relatives the Colignys, because they were, at least, of the same religious sentiments as the Court? It was too evident to them that, like the murdered Admiral, they had the Queen-Mother's jealousy to contend with at every step where their power threatened to rival hers.

Besides, all those who from whatever cause were discontented with the dominant party at Court, both those who stood in fear of it, and those who had boldly determined to obtain concessions from it, were not disposed to allow the Huguenots, as the opponents of the Court party, to be completely suppressed, at all events, as long as it seemed to suit their own purpose.

No wonder that as soon as a military enterprise was contemplated, the internal weakness of the Royal party appeared a humiliating contrast to the unsuspected internal strength of the small body of Protestants. The fortified maritime city of Rochelle was considered their last stronghold. The best of the matter was that the Huguenots themselves considered it to be so. They defended it and fought for it as if it had been their very

Palladium, when Catherine sent her favourite son with a formidable army, under the command of Biron, to take the town in order that, on the last ruins of French Protestantism by the sea, the work begun on St. Bartholomew's Eve might be completed. Rochelle was defended by only 1,500 soldiers and 2,000 armed citizens. But all, even the women and children, joined in the struggle. The assistance brought by Montgomery from England was very inconsiderable. But the besieged proved sufficient in themselves. For five months the siege continued, but the Rochellers were not fighting only for themselves. It had been thought that, by promising the town full religious freedom and all their civil rights, they would be glad to come to terms. However, they would not listen to any conditions as long as all their co-religionists throughout France were not permitted to share the advantages which had been obtained by their brave resistance.

Among the many strange incidents in this military undertaking, the strangest was that respecting the Commander of Rochelle. He had been sent to them by the King himself. De la Noue, a Calvinist, who had made an unsuccessful attempt shortly before the murder of Coligny to direct the military operations towards the Netherlands, had been despatched by the king to Rochelle to endeavour to obtain the confidence of the inhabitants and to persuade them to surrender. The Rochellers knew this, and yet they agreed to admit him into the town only on condition that he would become their commander. He fulfilled his military duties towards his party as conscientiously as he attended to his patriotic duties towards his country, by urging the Rochellers—whenever they had made a successful sortie—to come to terms of peace. It was only as a negotiator of peace that the Rochelle people did not obey him. Still, it remains a rare honour for the Protestants to have had among them a man who stood so resolutely midway between Court flatteries and an excited religious party, that he was equally esteemed by both, as neither faction was able to lead him from his own convictions.

One of the greatest advantages to the Rochellers was that the force brought against them had been chosen for the sake of its numerical strength, and not for its efficiency. The army had been formed of all those persons whom the Court could in any way induce to co-operate with it —even treacherous friends and weaklings—and it was so slow in moving towards its destination that the defenders of Rochelle had meanwhile been able to store up in the town provisions of all kinds. On the other hand, the worst enemy in the camp of the besieging army was the many useless individuals among their number; and their seeming leader, the hated Duke of Anjou, was the cause of the continuance of their vain struggle. He proved himself here—as in fact throughout his life,—a slave to the blind ambition of never giving up anything he had once begun. And yet even this obstinacy did not stimulate him to do the utmost for his purpose, considering the means at his command. And the army became precisely like himself. A number of ventures were made without any definite plan, and disorder greatly thinned the ranks of his army. Disease produced even greater havoc among the troops. And as no evil ever arises without producing the seeds for some new evil, it was this very combination of a number of malcontents in his army that gave every dissatisfied individual full opportunity of making or joining a faction among his fellows. It was, perhaps, the irregularity of youthful impulsiveness to become important before its day, that at this time induced the Duke of Anjou's younger brother, the Duke d'Alençon, to make a rash but unsuccessful intrigue against the Court. Still, it is bad enough when this ambition to play the malcontent is aroused in one so young in years. A uselessly excited ambition never fails to place everything in its immediate surroundings likewise in a state of unrest, if only to conceal from itself and others that it has nothing to achieve.

Scarcely had the Duke of Anjou's elevation to the throne of Poland given him a seeming pretext for getting quit of the Rochelle difficulty by a treaty of peace (of the 6th July, 1573); scarcely had Catherine, with a significant look at King Charles, who was already visibly fading away, allowed the Duke to leave her arms for Poland, a kingdom that had for centuries been the plaything of foreign nations; scarcely had it seemed that one of the last strongholds of the Protestant party had been destroyed by the barbarous capture of the small fortress of Sanserre, which had rivalled Rochelle in bravery of resistance, but had not been as favoured by outward circumstances; scarcely had these occurrences taken place, when the dread monster of internal strife reappeared twice its former size, and appeared not only in the provinces but at Court, and even in the midst of the royal family.

Charles's end was to be a terrible one. Since he had so completely lost himself amid the horrors of Saint Bartholomew's Eve, he had never again been what he might have been. Just as he had never possessed strength of mind to keep himself from degrading his humanity and the royal dignity of which he was the representative, now, after the deed had been done, he was neither so frivolous nor so wholly devoid of conscience as to escape from the agonies of remorse by forming slippery excuses, or to meet his disgrace with a defiant brow. The superstition of his day, to which he had himself sacrificed so many victims, became the instrument of his own punishment. When he was alone, he fancied himself pursued by the avenging spirits of those who had been slain at his command. Bloody spectres chased sleep from his pillow at night, and made his solitary hours a hell. With his characteristic vehemence, he plunged into wild dissipations, but exhaustion again handed him over to the torments of his own distracted mind. He tried to blunt his feelings by perpetrating new acts of cruelty; but he was too young, and by nature, in reality, of too kindly a disposition, to succeed in obtaining the abominable consolation of hardened villains. Catherine knew how to persuade herself that she had only some four or six murders from St. Bartholomew's Eve on her conscience. These lives she had herself specially demanded. But for these she could readily have obtained absolution; when, for instance, a father-confessor like Naudé,[1] in the polished language of the Court, described the whole villainous procedure as "a stroke of policy."

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[1] Gabr. Naudé, in his "*Considérations politiques sur les* COUPS D'ETAT," Chap. III., regrets that this "stroke of policy was only half carried out." Very consistent!

Charles, on the other hand, to silence his inward misgivings, had to direct his attention to his surroundings; his troubles were cast into the background by his anxiety regarding the dangers immediately around him. He knew the character of the brother next him in age. History knows him by the name of Henry III. In referring to him here, we need only remember that she who had arranged the bloody marriage preferred him to all her other sons. And this mother knew what her son Charles was. She it was who had led him to the brink of the precipice where he now stood shuddering in despair; and she could now drive him where she pleased. Or was he unaware how often suspicion, at least, had been cast upon her of being the Italian too, in her skill with poisons, even when deaths occurred in the royal family? He had himself so often been the tool of her ambition, which never failed to find its means, that he would have been terrified of his own mother, had he ever ventured to oppose her suggestions while his younger brother was in her embrace.

Fate seemed to have some pity for him, inasmuch as, in 1573, Henry of Anjou quitted France to become King of Poland. It is extremely probable that too great a charge of guilt is raised against the Queen-Mother in maintaining that she did not allow her second son to leave her side till she had convinced herself of the approaching death of the elder brother. It is, indeed, true that Charles's health was visibly on the decline. But the vehement youth on the throne had done so much to injure his own health by trifling with nature's secret poisons, that it is scarcely necessary to regard the agonizing troubles of his latter years as the only cause of his fading away before he had reached his twenty-fifth year. His very appearance might have convinced his mother that she could safely allow Henry to depart for Poland with the significant words: "Go, my son, it will not be long before we have you back again."

Charles's condition remained unimproved even when relieved of Henry's presence. Day by day his continued ill-health rendered his thoughts of the future gloomier than ever; he withdrew himself more and more from every form of sympathy, and the causes that produced his sudden changes from reckless impetuosity to utter dejection were always on the increase.

Catherine seemed inclined fully to compensate herself for the absence of her favourite son by giving free reins to her own ambition. When Charles proved unmanageable and vehement, which he often was, she in return added to the terrors always troubling him by carefully developing all the worst possibilities in her report of the real or fictitious state of affairs; her object was that he should the more patiently allow her, as his saviour, to wield the royal sceptre. The King's strength now enabled him only to see himself everywhere entangled in his mother's meshes, and to feel the hatred which she was still drawing upon his name by the assassinations she planned, the promises that were broken, and by the general state of discontent aroused among the different parties: the King's name, in fact, was made use of invariably to cover her actions.

The ambition exhibited by Charles's third brother at the siege of Rochelle, of making himself of importance in some way or another, was always giving fresh proofs of its existence. The Duke spent a goodly amount of time in devising and disclosing his plans for escaping from Court. He seemed to wish to escape in order that others might learn to estimate his importance from the trouble that would be taken to discover his whereabouts and to bring him back. But other and more experienced agitators concealed their designs behind the vehement recklessness of this youth. Under the protection of the Prince's name, a party of malcontents was formed at Court, and in order to distinguish them from the religious faction of the Protestants, they were called the Politicians. Yet they never deserved the appellation in the ordinary sense of the word. Their system of politics did no one any good except their opponents. As long as the Protestants were in league with them, Catherine's game against both parties was simpler than ever. Were it not known for certain that the Duke of Alençon's interests were against his second brother's claims to the throne of France, and hence also opposed to the Queen-Mother, there would be more probability in the supposition that the Duke acted more as a spy among the malcontents for his mother than as her opponent; but with inconceivable indiscretion he informed against all those who had plotted with him; by some unaccountable means this woman came to know something of the plot, and she thereupon again took the regency over Charles and over France into her own hands. When she wished to make this unmanageable as well as unhappy tool of hers tremble before her, she contrived to represent the conspiracies of the Duke as so formidable that the whole Court and the sick King were on one occasion about to flee to Paris in their night-dresses out of their fear of him. "If only they would wait till I am dead!" sobbed the poor youth who was mentally and physically tired of life.

But he lived to see his troops start off to fight his favourite brother, when at length the latter had actually fled from Court, accompanied by the King of Navarre—long a badly treated slave at Court—and by the Prince of Condé.

He lived to see the impossibility of handing over his sceptre to any other hands than those of his mother, and hence to the brother who had been despatched to Poland with so much cunning and glee. He lived to see the Protestants re-appear in the open field, and saw, in their alliance with all the malcontents in the kingdom, a proof that discord would again soon spit forth fire, as it were from a double mouth, the result of religious as well as civil discontent, and that those deeds which had tortured his soul ever since Saint Bartholomew's Eve had been as fruitless as they had been atrocious. In short, what he lived to see was enough to make it some comfort to him not to be the father of a son who would have inherited from him the burden of a crown.

THE DUKE OF ALVA AT A BREAKFAST AT THE CASTLE OF RUDOLSTADT IN THE YEAR 1547.[1]

IN turning over the leaves of an old chronicle of the 16th century (*Res in Ecclesia et Politia Christiana gestae ab anno* 1500 *ad an.* 1600. *Aut J. Soffing, Th. D. Rudolst,* 676), I found the following anecdote, which, for more reasons than one, deserves to be rescued from oblivion. I find it corroborated in a pamphlet entitled: *Mausolea manibus Metzelii posita à Fr. Melch. Dedekindo* 1738; and it is also to be found in Spangenberg's *Adelspiegel*, Pt. I. vol. xiii. p. 445.

It was a German lady, the member of a family which had already distinguished itself by acts of heroism, and which had given the German Empire an emperor, who on one occasion, by her resolute demeanour, made the formidable Duke of Alva almost tremble in her presence. When Charles V. in 1547, after the battle at Mühlberg, passed through Thuringia on his way towards Franconia and Swabia, the widowed Countess Catherine of Schwarzburg, *née* Princess of Henneberg, obtained from him a letter of assurance that none of her subjects should be put to any inconvenience whatsoever by the Spanish army passing through her territory. The Countess, on the other hand, undertook to send bread, beer and other provisions from Rudolstadt to the Saal bridge, for a fair remuneration. She took the precaution, however, of having the bridge forthwith unfastened from its usual position by the town, and placed across the river at some distance further off, in order that her predatory guests might not be led into temptation by coming too close to the town. At the same time the inhabitants of all the places through which the army was to pass were permitted to send all their most valuable possessions to Rudolstadt Castle for safety's sake.

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[1] This article appeared in the *Teutsche Merkur* of October, 1788, subscribed "S." Körner, in his edition of Schiller, included it among the poet's works. Söffing's work Schiller would find in the library of Von Ketelhodt, of Rudolstadt, who was an intimate friend of the Lengefelds, of which family Schiller's wife was a member.

Meanwhile the Spanish general approached the town, accompanied by Duke Henry of Brunswick and his sons, and despatched a messenger in advance with a request to the Countess of Schwarzburg that she would receive them to breakfast as her guests. This modest request from a man at the head of a large army could not well be refused. Her reply to the Duke's messenger was that he was welcome to what her house could afford; his Excellency might come if he pleased, but must be satisfied with what there was to offer. The Countess further again referred to the letter of assurance she had received, and begged the General to see that the conditions were conscientiously observed.

A friendly reception and a well-provisioned table awaited the Duke at the castle. He had to admit that the Thuringian ladies kept a well-ordered kitchen, and that they knew the honours due to hospitality. The party had scarcely sat down to breakfast when a special messenger arrived and the Countess was summoned from the hall. She was told that in some of the villages the Spanish soldiers had used force and robbed the peasants of their cattle. Catherine was a mother to her people; what was committed against the poorest of her subjects she felt committed against herself. Although exceedingly indignant at this breach of faith, she did not lose her presence of mind, and gave orders that her whole retinue were to arm with despatch and silently, and that the castle gates were to be bolted and barred; she herself returned to the banqueting-hall, where the Dukes were still seated at breakfast. The Countess thereupon informed them in the most impressive manner what had occurred, and how shamefully the Emperor's promise had been disregarded. She was told jocosely that these were the customs of war, and that soldiers could not be prevented from committing such trifling offences while on the march. "That remains to be seen," the Countess replied angrily; "to my poor people shall be restored what belongs to them, or, by God"—and here her voice took a menacing tone—"princes' blood for bullocks' blood." With this summary exclamation she left the apartment, which in a few minutes was filled with a body of armed men. With sword in hand they stationed themselves behind the Dukes' chairs, and yet with much deferential respect they continued to receive every attention during their breakfast. When the warlike host entered the hall, the Duke of Alva changed colour, and the two men looked at each other in silence and dismay. Cut off from their army and surrounded by a superior body of armed men, what could they do but remain patient, and try to conciliate the offended lady as best they could? Henry of Brunswick recovered his composure first, and burst out into loud laughter. He adopted the wisest plan of making the whole proceeding appear ludicrous, and then addressed the Countess in terms of the highest praise for her motherly care of her subjects and for the resolute courage she had exhibited. He begged her not to distress herself, and undertook to persuade the Duke of Alva to do nothing but what was just. And, indeed, he succeeded in inducing Alva forthwith to despatch an order to his soldiers to return the cattle they had taken from the people without delay. As soon as the Countess of Schwarzburg had satisfied herself that the stolen cattle had been restored to their owners, she thanked her guests very graciously, and they very politely took their leave of her.

No doubt it was this act which obtained for the Countess the surname of the Heroic. She is further celebrated for her unwearied efforts in encouraging Protestantism in her dominions, this religion having been introduced into the country by her husband, Count Henry XXXVII., also in abolishing monkdom, and in improving the instruction given in the schools. Many of the Protestant preachers who were persecuted on account of their religion found protection and sustenance in her dominions. Among these was a certain Caspar Aquila, a pastor in Saalfeld, who in his younger years had followed the Emperor's army to the Netherlands as a field preacher. On one occasion, when he refused to baptise a cannon ball, the riotous soldiery determined to stuff the poor man into a bomb, and to shoot him into the air; this fate he fortunately escaped, as the powder would not take fire. His life was again in danger when the sum of 5000 gulden was offered for his head, because he had excited the

Emperor's anger by having spoken disparagingly of his interim from his pulpit. Catherine, on being appealed to by the Saalfeld people, allowed him secretly to take refuge in her castle, where she kept him concealed for several months, and he was taken care of there with the utmost humanity till he could again appear in public without danger. The Countess died, universally respected and lamented, in the fifty-eighth year of her age and the twenty-ninth of her reign. Her remains were consigned to the church of Rudolstadt.

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